



Gaston County

Gaston County
Board of Commissioners
www.gastongov.com

Parks & Recreation

Board Action

File #: 26-196

Commissioner Cloninger - Parks and Recreation - To Accept and Endorse Improvements to George Poston Park for the Spencer Mountain Trails Project by the Carolina Thread Trail

STAFF CONTACT

Michael Applegate - Parks, Recreation & Tourism - 704-922-2162

BUDGET IMPACT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Board Action is for the Board of Commissioners to approve the attached agreement for the Carolina Thread Trail to make improvements to the Spencer Mountain Trails project, located at George Poston Park. The only funds discussed in this agreement are those which the Carolina Thread Trail would be responsible for, which is \$241,150. As part of our ongoing collaboration and partnership with Carolina Thread Trail on the Spencer Mountain Trails Project, Carolina Thread Trail will be contributing several improvements to George Poston Park. These include a trailhead area near soccer field 4, a base camp overlook near Déjà vu Loop trails, thread art near the park entrance and at the trailhead, as well as wayfinding, EMS, and interpretive signage adjacent to the Thread Trail throughout the park. All improvements have been reviewed and accepted by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board at the April 2026 and October 2025 meetings. The naming rights for Caromont Health have also been approved by the Board of Commissioners, found in Resolution 2025-357. Additionally, the attached temporary easement has already been approved as well.

POLICY IMPACT

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

George Poston Park Improvements, Interpretive Signage Images, Temporary Easement Agreement, and Interpretive Signage Agreement

DO NOT TYPE BELOW THIS LINE

I, Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows:

NO.	DATE	M1	M2	JBailey	CBrown	CCloninger	AFraley	BHovis	TKeigher	SShehan	Vote
2026-178	05/26/2026	AF	JB	A	A	AB	A	A	AB	A	U

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LANDS CONSERVANCY
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CAROLINA
THREAD TRAIL

Staff Contact: Ashton Lamb, Trail Development Manager

Report Date: 3/17/2026

George Poston Park Improvements by CTT

Background:

The Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) obtained access to Spencer Mountain from WBTV via a Trail Easement agreement in 2024. Soon after, we began formalizing plans for trail improvements necessary to create an iconic and accessible outdoor destination at Spencer Mountain. Spencer Mountain is the third highest natural point in the greater Charlotte region at 1,250 ft. It is located just north of Gaston County's George Poston Park.

Gaston County has developed a 1.5-mile improved natural surface trail (dirt with recycled concrete surfacing) and a .5-mile sidewalk connector trail from the South Fork River to the base of Spencer Mountain in George Poston Park. CTT awarded Gaston County \$92,375 to develop this project. George Poston Park will be the primary trailhead area for the 1,000,000 anticipated users visiting Spencer Mountain.

CTT is leading the development of all trails and trail facilities for the Spencer Mountain Trail Project. Approximately \$1.8 million in improvements are planned for Spencer Mountain and George Poston Park. These improvements include 3 miles of highly accessible trail, overlooks, trailhead facilities, a small park at the summit of Spencer Mountain, and art sculptures. Gaston County will maintain and operate the trails and facilities post construction.

Poston Park Improvements:

CTT is planning the following improvements for Poston Park specifically:

- Trailhead area near soccer fields
 - Base Area Kiosk
 - Sitting Boulders
 - Split Rail Fencing
 - Bench, trashcan, bike rack
 Cost=\$60,050
- Base Camp Overlook near Déjà vu Loop trails
 - Base Camp Overlook
 - Small kiosk
 - Bench
 Cost=\$94,000
- Thread Art
 - Single Thread Sculpture w/ Spool (Near park entrance)
 - Three Thread Sculpture (At Spencer Mtn. trailhead near soccer fields)
 Cost=\$87,100



- CATAWBA -
LANDS CONSERVANCY
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CAROLINA
THREAD TRAIL

Total investment by CTT=\$241,150

Improvements also include various wayfinding, EMS, and interpretative signage adjacent to the Thread Trail through the park.

These improvements have been reviewed and approved by the Gaston County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism department. All improvements would be within a Temporary Construction Easement granted to CTT by Gaston County on December 2, 2025.

Request:

CTT asks that Gaston County allow them to develop improvements at George Poston Park as described in this report.

Attachments:

- Concepts of Poston Park improvements by CTT
- Map of improvement areas within George Poston Park



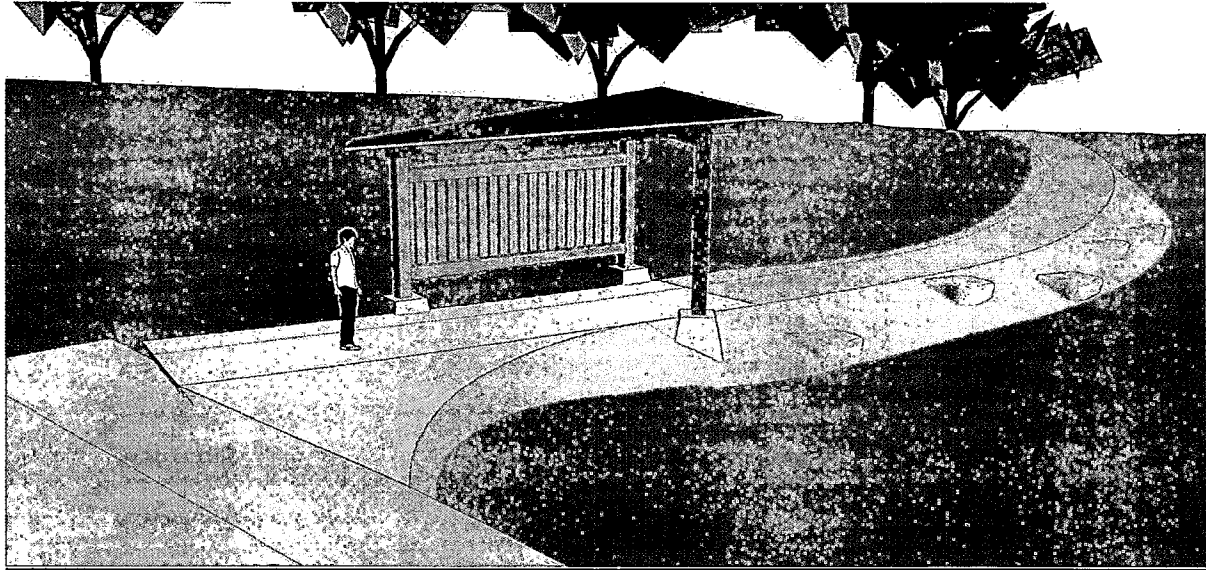
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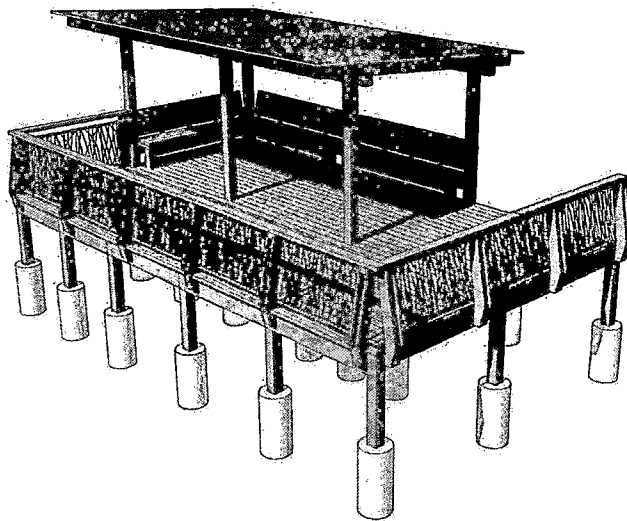
CAROLINA
THREAD TRAIL.

Concepts of Park Improvements by CTT

Trailhead Area



Base Camp Overlook



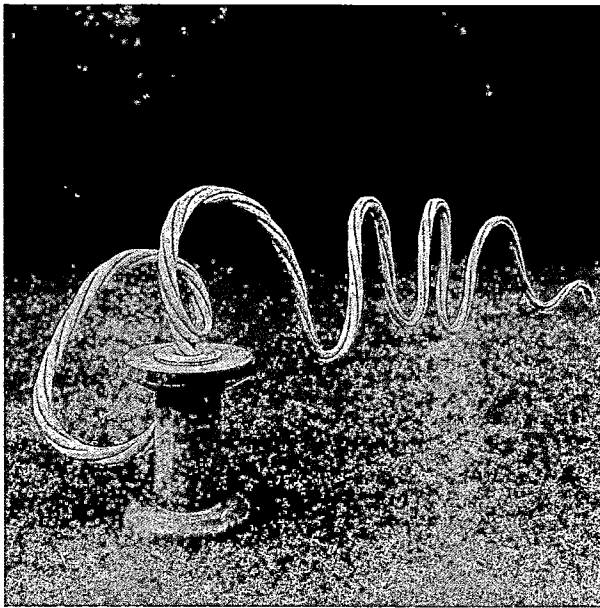
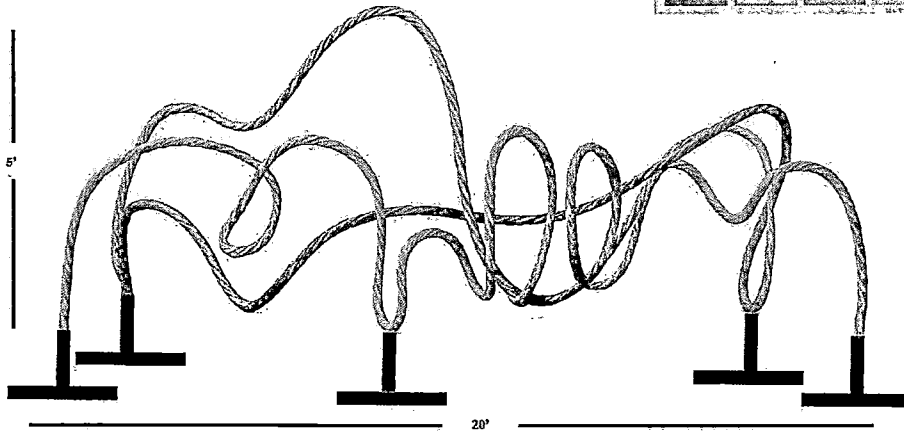


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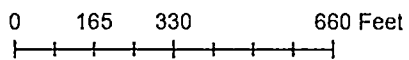
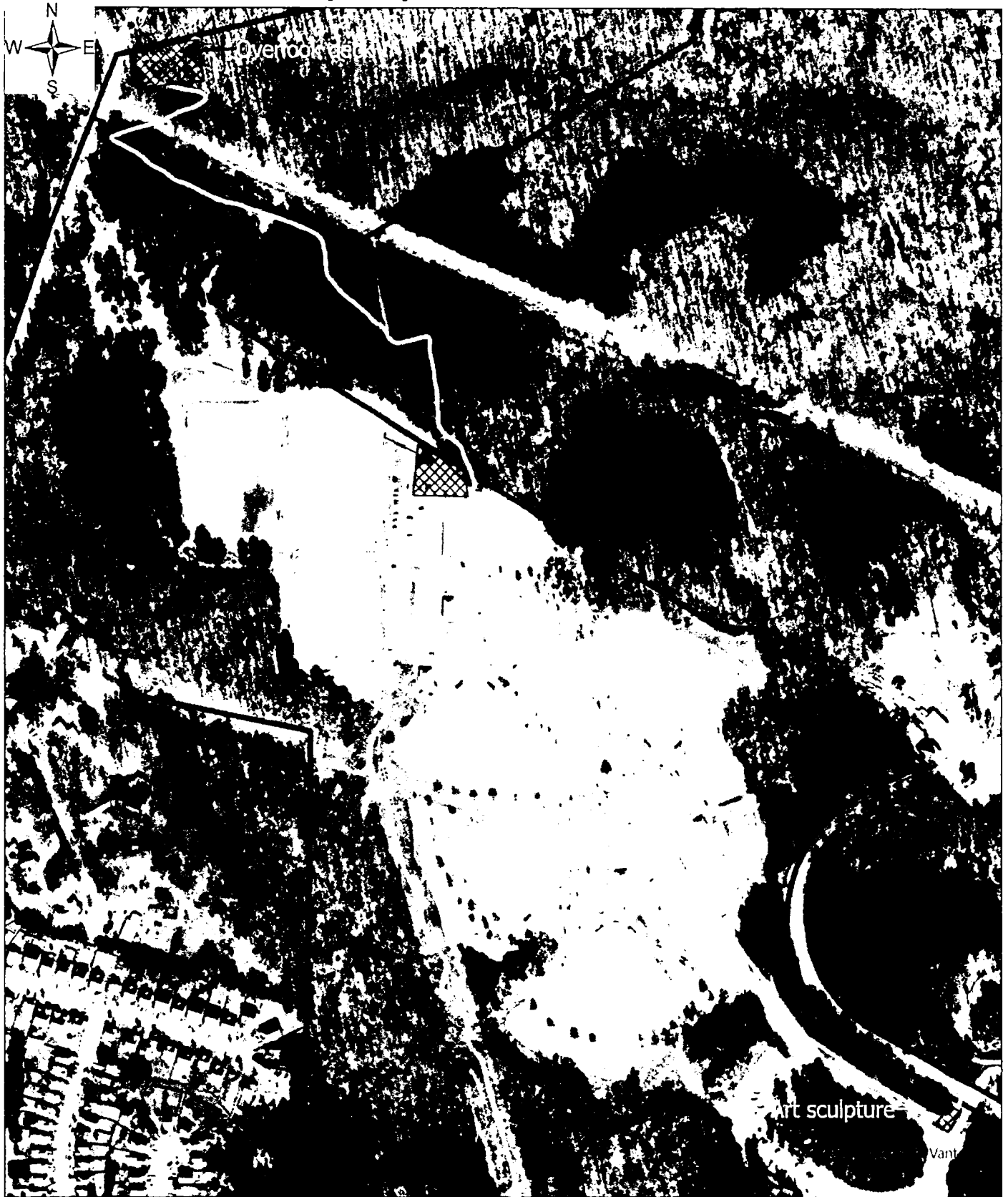


CAROLINA
THREAD TRAIL

Thread Art



George Poston Park Temporary Construction Easement



Spencer Mountain Construction
Gaston County, NC
Projection: NAD 1983
Created by ACL 11/20/2025

Legend

- Base Loop Trail (1.6 miles)
- Mountain Side Trail (1.1 miles)
- ▣ Temporary Staging Areas
- ▭ George Poston Park

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GASTON

TEMPORARY EASEMENT AGREEMENT

THIS DEED OF EASEMENT (the "Temporary Easement Agreement"), is made this 2nd day of ~~December~~ 2025, by and between Gaston County, a political subdivision of the State of North Carolina, whose address is PO Box 1578 Gastonia, NC 28053 ("Grantor") and Catawba Lands Conservancy, a North Carolina not for profit organization ("Grantee"), whose address is 2400 Park Road, Suite 1, Charlotte, NC 28203:

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the Grantor is the owner of a certain parcel or tract of land having been acquired by Grantor by instrument recorded in Deed Book 2030 at Page 246 of the Gaston County Register of Deeds Office (the "Property") and shown on the map attached hereto as Exhibit A (the "Property and Easement Map") and incorporated herein by reference; and

WHEREAS, Grantee desires to acquire a temporary easement over, across, and through the Property as shown on the Property and Easement Map and as described herein for the purpose(s) described below, including without limitation the construction of a trailhead area, overlook deck, art sculptures, trashcans, benches located along the Mountainside Trail (as such trail is shown on the Property and Easement Map) within the Property and proceeding to Spencer Mountain (the "Project"); and

WHEREAS, Grantee desires to establish temporary staging areas for its contractor(s) at the trailhead area, overlook deck and art sculpture sites within the Property as shown on the Property and Easement Map.

NOW THEREFORE, the Grantor, for and in consideration of the sum of Ten Dollars (\$10.00), and other good and valuable consideration, to them in hand paid, does hereby:

1. **Grant of Temporary Easement:** Grantor does hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey to Grantee, its successors and assigns, the right and easement over, across and upon the Property for the Project and the purpose(s) indicated below and so labeled on the Map and including up to five (5) benches along the Mountainside Trail in George Poston Park, the location of which will be provided to Grantor at least thirty (30) days before construction of the benches begin (the "Temporary Easement"). The Temporary Easement shall be limited in time and shall become null and void twelve (12) months after completion of construction of the Project.

Temporary Construction Easement
 Temporary Planting Easement

Grantor Initial /
Grantor Initial /

2. **Inclusive of Improvements:** This conveyance includes all improvements located within the Temporary Easement area.

3. **No Interference:** Grantor shall not construct, locate or install any improvements, including landscaping, within the Temporary Easement area, or otherwise make use of the Temporary Easement area in a way that is inconsistent with or would otherwise interfere with Grantee's ability to exercise its rights hereunder.

4. **Interpretation:** The designation Grantor and Grantee as used herein shall include said parties, their heirs, successors, and assigns, and shall include singular, plural, masculine, feminine or neuter as required by context.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the Temporary Easement unto the Grantee, its successors and assigns, for the aforesaid uses and purposes and none other.

[SIGNATURES ON FOLLOWING PAGES]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Grantor and Grantee by their respective duly authorized representatives, have caused this Temporary Easement Agreement to be executed as of the day and year first above written.

GRANTOR:

GASTON COUNTY

By: [Signature]

Name: Matthew Rhoten

Its: Gaston County Manager

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF Gaston

I, Lathie Forrester, a Notary Public for the County and State aforesaid, certify that Matthew Rhoten personally came before me this day and acknowledged that he/she is manager of Gaston County and that he/she, as manager, being authorized to do so, executed the foregoing on behalf of the corporation and the said manager acknowledged the said writing to be the act and deed of said corporation.

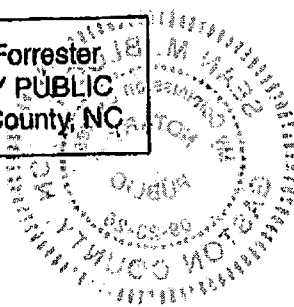
WITNESS my hand and notarial seal this 20th day of November, 2025.

[Signature]
Notary Public

My commission expires:

July 28, 2026

[NOTARY SEAL]



GRANTEE:

CATAWBA LANDS CONSERVANCY

By: 

Name: C. Barton Landess

Its: Executive Director

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF Mecklenburg

I, Sean Bloom, a Notary Public of the County and State aforesaid, certify that C. Barton Landess personally came before me this day and acknowledged that he is Executive Director of **CATAWBA LANDS CONSERVANCY**, a North Carolina nonprofit corporation, and that he, as Executive Director, being authorized to do so, executed the foregoing on behalf of the corporation and acknowledged the said writing to be the act and deed of said corporation.

WITNESS my hand and notarial seal this 2 day of December, 2025.

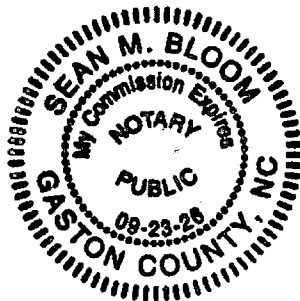


Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

09-23-2026

[NOTARY SEAL]

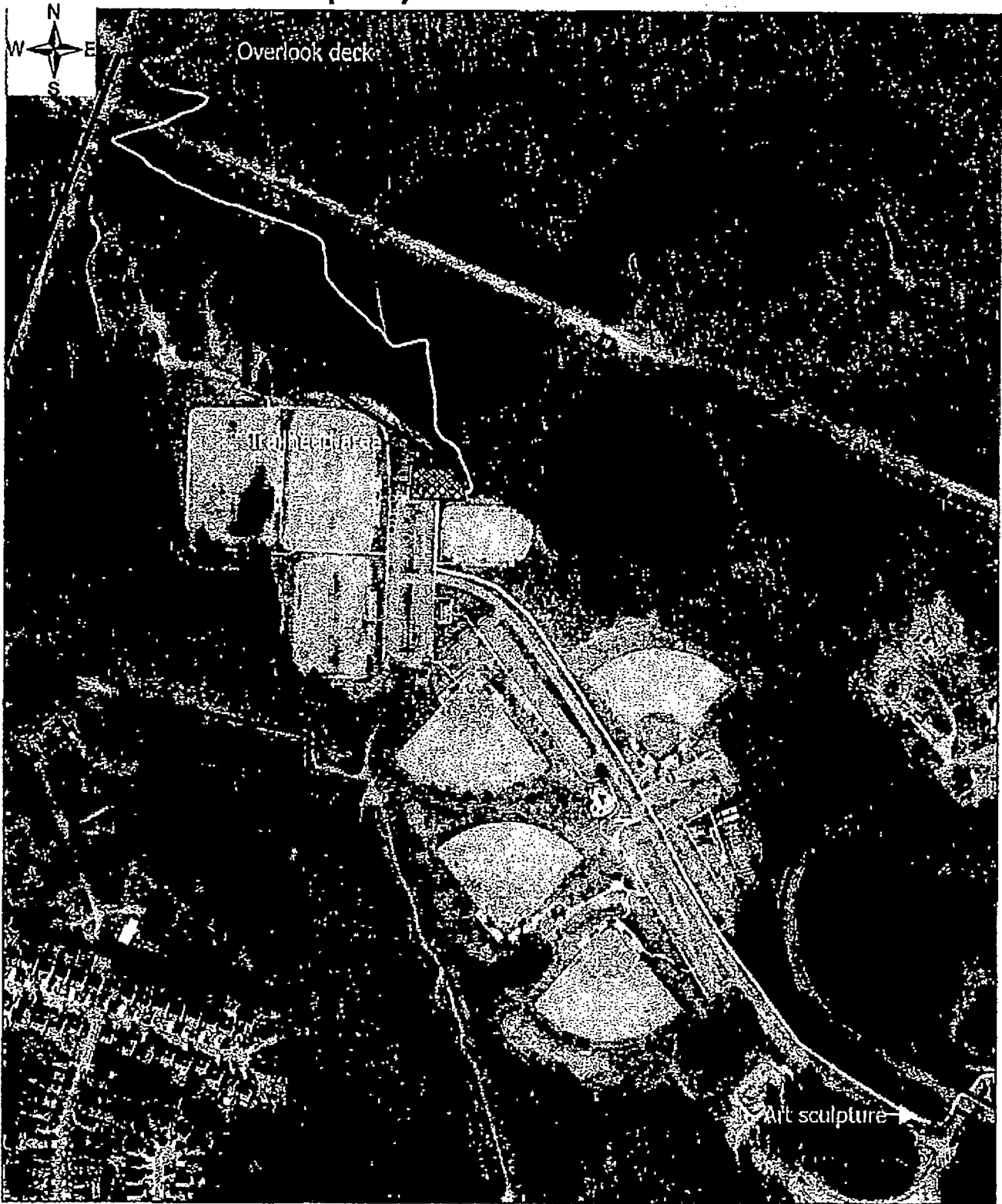


The foregoing Certificate(s) of _____

is/are certified to be correct. This instrument and this certificate are duly registered at the date and time and in the Book and Page shown on first page hereof.

By _____ REGISTER OF DEEDS FOR GASTON COUNTY
Deputy/Assistant-Register of Deed

George Poston Park Temporary Construction Easement



0 186 330 660 Feet

Spencer Mountain Construction
Gaston County, NC
Projection: NAD 1983
Created by ACL 11/20/2025

Legend

- Base Loop Trail (1.6 miles)
- - - Mountainside Trail (1.1 miles)
- ▣ Temporary Staging Areas
- ▭ George Poston Park

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF GASTON

INTERPRETATIVE SIGNAGE AGREEMENT

THIS INTERPRETATIVE SIGNAGE AGREEMENT (the “Agreement”), is made this ___ day of _____, 2026, by and between Gaston County, a political subdivision of the State of North Carolina, whose address is PO Box 1578 Gastonia, NC 28053 (“County”) and Catawba Lands Conservancy, a North Carolina not for profit organization (“CLC”), whose address is 2400 Park Road, Suite 1, Charlotte, NC 28203:

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the County and CLC have worked together to develop an interpretative master plan for trails located in George Poston Park, Gaston County, North Carolina, locations of which are more particularly shown on **Exhibit A** attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference (the “Signage”), and

WHEREAS, the County has agreed to contribute ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) as a cost-share with CLC for a portion of the cost of fabrication, purchase, and installation of Signage (the “Cost Share Payment”), and

WHEREAS, the County has agreed to provide routine maintenance of the Signage and around the areas of installation, and

WHEREAS, the County has agreed to replace Signage, correct damage or conduct major repairs as needed, and

WHEREAS, the parties hereto recognize and agree that the Signage is important for natural, cultural, and historical interpretation to trail users, and

WHEREAS, the parties hereto jointly acknowledge the value and community benefits of trails and interpretive signs and voluntarily enter into this Agreement to establish the responsibilities of the County and CLC with respect to the Signage;

NOW, THEREFORE IN CONSIDERATION OF the foregoing, the parties acknowledge and agree to the terms and conditions set forth in this Agreement:

1. **Sign Types.** The initial installation of Signage includes but isn’t limited to upright, double pedestal, single pedestal, or snake stake signs as shown on **Exhibit B** attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. Quantities of each sign type have yet to be determined and are subject to change based on Signage pricing or alterations of the Signage locations or adjustments to Signage priorities.

2. **Fabrication.** CTT shall be responsible for purchasing all Signage from the selected fabricator based on the specifications agreed upon with the County.
3. **Installation.** All Signage shall be installed by the contractor or subcontractor selected by CTT to perform such services, unless otherwise agreed with the County to use its own employees, contractors or subcontractors to complete installation.
4. **Routine Maintenance.** The County will clean all Signage surfaces and shall clear all vegetation or other debris as necessary to prevent injury and to provide an aesthetically pleasing interpretative trail experience.
5. **Replacement.** In the event of damage to or destruction of the Signage, the County will be responsible for replacement. Signs requiring replacement will be of the same type and installed in the same manner and in the same location as shown on Exhibit A, if feasible. If Signage cannot be replaced in the same location designated in Exhibit A for a technical reason, the parties shall mutually agree upon an alternate location.
6. **Monitoring.** The County and CLC both agree to visually monitor and inspect the Signage for damage at regular intervals. In the event Signage is in poor condition, damaged or destroyed, the party who observed this issue will notify the party responsible for maintenance, care or replacement through notice as described in Paragraph 9 below. Once notified, the responsible party will address, or engage a contractor or subcontractor to address, the issue within thirty (30) days.
7. **Access.** The County shall not unreasonably restrict access to the Signage locations.
8. **Payment.** The Cost Share Payment shall be made by check written out to the Catawba Lands Conservancy, and shall be disbursed by mail to the address set forth in Paragraph 9 within (30) days of the Effective Date of this Agreement.
9. **Notices.** Any notice or communication that either party desires or is required to give to the other shall be in writing and either served personally or sent by first class mail, postage prepaid, addressed as follows:

Gaston County: Gaston County
 128 W. Main Ave
 Gastonia, NC 28053
 Attention: Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Director

CLC and CTT: Catawba Lands Conservancy
 2400 Park Rd, Suite 1
 Charlotte, North Carolina 28203
 Attention: Executive Director

or to such other address as either party from time to time shall designate by written notice to the other.

10. **Insurance.** At all times while this Agreement remains in force and effect, CLC shall maintain commercial general liability insurance coverage and shall require any contractors or subcontractors performing work related to the Signage installation, replacement or other repair to maintain insurance sufficient to meet the County's requirements and shall name the County as an additional insured.
11. **Applicable Law.** This Agreement shall be deemed to be a contract entered into pursuant to the laws of the State of North Carolina and shall in all respects be governed, construed, applied and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina. This Agreement is Effective as of the date first referenced above.
12. **Amendment.** This Agreement may not be amended except by written instrument mutually agreed upon and duly executed by the parties hereto.

[SIGNATURES ON FOLLOWING PAGES]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this instrument to be executed and effective as of the day and year first above written.

GASTON COUNTY, a political subdivision of the State of North Carolina

By: _____

Name: _____

Its: _____

CATAWBA LANDS CONSERVANCY, a North Carolina nonprofit corporation

By: _____

Name: C. Barton Landess

Its: Executive Director

EXHIBIT A
Signage Location Map

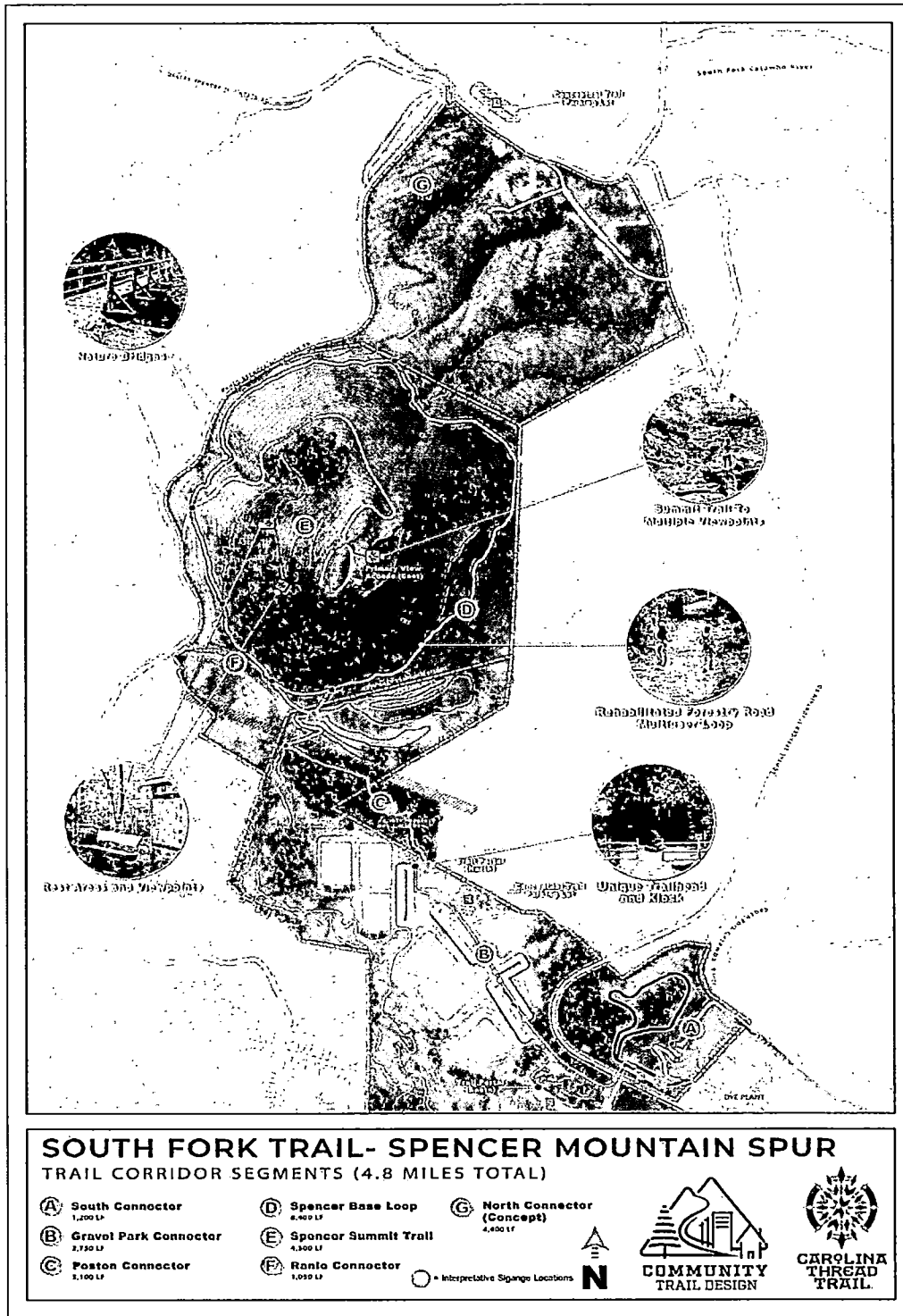


EXHIBIT B

Interpretative Signage Types

Upright



Double Pedestal



Single Pedestal



Snake Stake

