

# Red Bank Celebrates Opening of the White Oak Connector Trail

Ninety-two acres of ridgeline and two cities connected

**Red Bank, TN** (October 17, 2022) – The highly anticipated White Oak Connector trail linking Red Bank’s White Oak Park to Stringers Ridge Park in North Chattanooga was opened to the public on Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. The ribbon-cutting ceremony at White Oak Park represented the culmination of a long-standing working partnership between the City of Red Bank, Trust for Public Land (TPL), and numerous private landowners, public utilities, real estate developers, and supporting organizations.

The White Oak Connector, first envisioned through Trust for Public Land’s initial protection of Stringer’s Ridge, kicked off in 2016 when the Tennessee River Gorge Trust donated two 16-acre parcels on Stringer Ridge to the City of Red Bank. The city partnered with Trust for Public Land (TPL), to complete the connector. TPL acquired the property from private owners needed to finish the trail, worked with Ragan-Smith on design and permitting, and then contracted with the Southeast Conservation Corps and Tucker Build to construct the trail. The one-mile trail corridor completes the original footprint of Stringer’s Ridge and connects Red Bank’s largest park to one of the region’s most accessible urban forests and trail networks.

This past Saturday, neighborhood park and trail advocates gathered to celebrate this milestone by participating in a family-friendly early morning hike. TPL led the group from the entrance of the White Oak Connector to the overlook in Stringer’s Ridge, one of the most popular vistas of Chattanooga.

Following the hike, city officials, invited guests, and members of the community and surrounding area gathered to officially open the Connector trail with a ceremony at White Oak Park. Mayor Hollie Berry commented that she was thrilled to celebrate Red Bank’s connection to Stringer’s Ridge and believes it is a win for Red Bank and for the quality of life of its residents.

“I’m thrilled we got to celebrate the grand opening of our fabulous White Oak Connector Trail alongside our community and all our partners,” said Red Bank Mayor Hollie Berry. “This trail has already become one of Red Bank’s daily outlets to the outdoors. We know spending time in nature makes us healthier, physically and mentally, but public spaces like these are not just improving our quality of life; they are improving nearby property values, attracting businesses and private

investment, and most importantly, becoming part of the social fabric of our community.”

One of the supporting organizations of the White Oak Connector Trail is The Lyndhurst Foundation. “The Lyndhurst Foundation is pleased to have been a part of the community effort to create the White Oak Park Connector Trail between Red Bank and Chattanooga through Stringer’s Ridge Park,” said Macon C. Toledano, Associate Director with the Lyndhurst Foundation. “The new path adds a major component to our growing trail network and will allow more people to access the beauty of Stringer’s Ridge from both sides of the park. We thank TPL, the City of Chattanooga, and the City of Red Bank for the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful project.”

The McKee Family made a significant investment in the White Oak Connector stating “The White Oak Connector linking Red Bank to Stringer’s Ridge Park is a perfect project for the McKee Family’s Outdoor Happiness movement because it will connect people and neighborhoods to spaces where they can be active outside.”

“This connector trail will be heavily used by runners, bikers, walkers, hikers and the community more generally,” says Red Bank City Manager Martin Granum. “It provides an amazing link from Red Bank into Chattanooga’s North Shore and **with a wonderful nature experience along the way. The underlying partnership** between the Trust for Public Land and the City of Red Bank is an example of how great ideas come to life and the entire community benefits. This path is nothing short of a huge win for the entire community and, as a trail runner myself, I can’t wait to incorporate it into my Little Debbie Ironman training runs for the 2023 Chattanooga Ironman.”

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