



For immediate release  
January 13, 2016

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### **\$350,000 Secured for Rail Trail Park** *Mary Black Foundation issues challenge grant*

Mary Black Foundation and Foundation for the Carolina's Longleaf Fund Seeds of Hope program announce funding commitments for implementation of a new community park along the Mary Black Foundation Rail Trail. The community park will be located between Forest Avenue and Country Club Road on 7-acres of property owned by Duke Energy.

Mary Black Foundation issued Partners for Active Living a challenge grant that if PAL could raise \$150,000, then Mary Black Foundation will give \$250,000 toward implementation of the proposed park plan. Foundation for the Carolinas Longleaf Seeds of Hope Fund awarded Partners for Active Living \$100,000. This leaves \$50,000 to be raised for the challenge grant.

According to Molly Talbot-Metz, Vice President of Programs for Mary Black Foundation, "The Mary Black Foundation is excited about the plans for a new community park along the MBF Rail Trail. Our challenge grant is intended to inspire others in the community to participate in creating a unique destination that will provide new recreational activities for a variety of different people in our community."

When the additional funds are raised, phase one of two for implementation will begin. This includes natural and hard surface walking trails, tree plantings, and an adventure park.

"In partnership with many community partners, PAL hopes to see a very special community gathering and play space along the MBF Rail Trail. We are tying important historical features into the park – our connection to the railroad and former trolley line in that area, and the watershed between the Fairforest and Lawson's Fork Creek that splits along the Rail Trail," said Laura Ringo, executive director of Partners for Active Living.

If Spartanburg residents are interested in providing feedback on the proposed plan, there is still time. Residents can learn about the plan and offer feedback by visiting [www.active-living.org](http://www.active-living.org) and clicking on 'News'.



In addition, residents can contribute financially by providing funding for trees throughout the park. These come with dedication plaques. To order a tree, residents can visit [www.active-living.org/productsforsale](http://www.active-living.org/productsforsale)

***About Partners for Active Living:*** Partners for Active Living transforms Spartanburg County, South Carolina into a vibrant, healthy, connected community where we live and grow. Approximately 75% of chronic diseases are preventable through healthy lifestyle choices, and Partners for Active Living is getting in front of the health issues facing our community. PAL wants physical activity to be as easy as possible in Spartanburg. "PAL" frames our work in a three pronged message, which all point to healthy eating and active living: *childhood obesity prevention, trail & park development, walking and bicycling for everyone.*

***About Mary Black Foundation:*** The Mary Black Foundation is an independent grantmaking organization that invests in people and communities for improved health, wellness, and success in Spartanburg County, SC. Since 1996, it has awarded more than \$43 million to nonprofit organizations serving the Spartanburg community.

***About Foundation for the Carolinas Longleaf Fund Seeds of Hope grant program:*** The "Seeds of Hope" grant program awards capital grants in select cities in North and South Carolina. Teaming together with strong nonprofit partners, Seeds of Hope grants aim to strengthen the character and achievement of children and youth, while encouraging communities to reach higher and create opportunities for a brighter future. The Longleaf Fund is an anonymous donor advised fund managed by Foundation For The Carolinas, the community foundation serving the greater Charlotte region.