

Time Line for the Proposed Lexington –Big Sandy Rail Trail.

109 miles. Lexington to Coalton which is outside of Ashland. Goes through Fayette, Clark, Montgomery, Bath, Rowan, Carter and Boyd Counties over the abandoned Chesapeake and Ohio (C& O) railroad corridor, later owned by CSX. CSX was created by a merger of the Chessie System, which represented the C&O and the Seaboard System which included the L & N. Approximately 21 miles of rail bed CSX still owns and could be obtained by purchase. The corridor connects Lexington, Winchester, Mt. Sterling, Salt Lick, Morehead, Olive Hill, and Ashland. It easily could connect to Cave Run Lake,

1869 The “Elizabethtown, Lexington and Big Sandy Railroad was chartered; a successor to the Lexington and Big Sandy Railroad. Leased and operated by Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company at cost. KY’s railroad mileage almost tripled between 1870 and 1890. At one time trains were the life’s blood of all the small towns in Kentucky.

1960 to -1990 By the 1960’s most passenger service had been stopped. In stages the line was abandoned in the 1980’s.

1995 Kentucky Rails to Trails Council, Inc. was incorporated as a 501 © (3) nonprofit tax-exempt organization. Purpose to “foster and facilitate the conservation of greenways and railroad right of ways in Kentucky by the conversion of the holdings to trail use for the general public.”

June 1997 An article in The Kentucky City by Sandy Shafer on creating a “green infrastructure”. She describes the KY Rails to Trails Council working with local groups to gain funding to acquire easements and right to use the land on 4 railroad beds, one of them being the Lexington-Big Sandy Rail Trail.

1998 Bluegrass Rails To Trail Foundation incorporated. Purpose to “foster and facilitate the conservation of greenways and railroads rights of ways in Central Kentucky, by the conversion of such holdings to trail use for the general public...”

2000 Daniel Boone Rails To Trails, 105 East Main Street, Morehead, KY incorporated.

2000 House Bill 221 was passed establishing the Office of Rail Trail Programs in the Department of Local Government. The office monitors abandonment and is making an inventory and assessment of abandoned railroad corridors.

December 2001 Mt. Sterling received \$100,000 in grant money to convert the abandon railroad line into a linear park. First phase expected to begin along tracks near South Queen Street extending west toward Pribble Park just off Richmond Avenue

April 2002 Governor Patton signed SCR 92, a resolution establishing a task force to examine the development of the Lexington/big Sandy Railtrail and create a strategy for its completion.

April 2002 The Cadentown Neighborhood Association (intersection of Todd’s Road and Liberty Rd.) War) in Fayette County submitted applications for grant money to make a Cadentown park and connect to the proposed Rail Trail. Cadentown was created as a freed African American community after the Civil War. A Rosenwald School Building and other structures are still standing.

June 2002 Fayette County Greenway Mater Plan approved which calls for the construction of the Brighton East Rail Trail in East Lexington on the route of the Lexington Big Sandy. Funding has been provided for this approximate 2 mile section. Construction due to begin in summer 2002.

Statistics from the US Department of Transportation indicate that trails “increase the property value of adjacent real estate, can provide tourist income for communities, spur the development of new businesses and create new jobs to serve trail users. Trails enhance the quality of life, improving the environment and provide opportunities for recreation, everybody benefits.

Funding for trails comes from Transportation Equity act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA-21), the successor to the ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) that authorized a wide range of federal aid transportation programs, including programs that fund trail acquisition and development. Other major sources are the Recreational Trails Program, Community Development Block Grant Programs, corporate and private foundations.

Goes from Bluegrass to the Eastern coalfield section. The Eastern Coalfields are bounded on the west by the Pottsville Escarpment, a high rock wall that is noted for its waterfalls, The knobs, a row of conical hills sometimes listed as a separate region, comprises leftover bits of the escarpment that marks the boundary with the bluegrass.