

Virginia Creeper Trail Club
General Membership Meeting
7 PM, June 29, 2011
Washington County Public Library

Present: Carolyn Barry, Charles W. Barry, Skip Blackburn, Tom Boyle, Jane Caldwell, Harold Croxton, Lawrence Dye, Link Elmore, Frieda (?), Bob Kilbourn, Chris Lindeman, Greg Meade, Sharon Miller, Wayne Miller, Jack Ritterskamp, Roger Reynolds, Jack Sklepowicz, Debbie Stern, Jeff VanCleaf, Bonnie Weaver, Robert Widner

VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

Wayne introduced past members visiting the area: Harold Croxton, Bob Kilbourn, Jack Ritterskamp

The minutes of the May 25, 2011 meeting were approved with two corrections: Bob Widner's name was added as being present; Wayne added a comment to the Committee Report that he attended a session at the National Scenic and Historic Trails Conference on May 18, 2011. Charles Barry motioned for approval, Tom Boyle seconded.

General Business / President's Report – Wayne Miller

- Wayne wrote a letter to the Abingdon Town Council regarding the flasher that has been spotted at the Abingdon trailhead. He suggested adding a police patrol on the 1st mile of the trail between 6-9 AM and 5-8:30 PM to deter the flasher. Other suggestions were raised to temporarily install a surveillance camera at Wye Park and installing a webcam. Wayne suggested taking the ideas to the Trail Advisory Board.
- Vehicle break-ins have been reported at the Watauga trailhead parking lot, and catalytic converters reported stolen from other public parking lots.
- Trestle #7 Replacement – Town of Abingdon completed the temporary trail and plan to install a bridge over the next year.
- Alvarado Station ribbon cutting was held to officially open the building on June 13, 2011. The Station contains rest rooms and space that will be used for a museum and interactive displays.
- Dr. and Mrs. Mann donated two acres of riverfront land across the road from the Alvarado Station.
- Damascus Town Mayor Jack McCready asked VCTC for help on some trail projects. Wayne stated that more information is needed regarding the request and that there are potential code issues with the proposed drainage pipes. He suggested that the VCTC Board review the proposal and consider providing funding and labor. The proposed projects include building the following:
 - Small sitting area between Laurel Creek and the trail, near Trestle #12,
 - Fishing access in two location on Damascus Town property,
 - Adding a put-in in Damascus and a take-out in Alvarado for kayaks and canoes,
 - Adding drainage pipes at the new relocation in Damascus.
- At the Alvarado Station ribbon cutting ceremony, Kevin Worley discussed future improvements including building of a pavilion on the 2 acres of land donated in Alvarado. There is still money earmarked for a pavilion by the Hassinger family that might be considered for this purpose. Kevin also suggested that VCTC buy gravel and the Town of Abingdon would deliver and spread it on the trail. Bob Horsch motioned to honor the Town of Abingdon request for supplying gravel for trail maintenance and to help the Town build a pavilion on the donated 2 acre parcel in Alvarado; Carolyn Barry seconded.

Treasurer Report

Greg Meade reported that more expenses are expected for trail resurfacing to repair tornado damage. He said that there's more than \$10,000 grant money remaining but the use is restricted. The funds must be used by the end of 2011. The question was raised if some of the remaining funds might be used for the Damascus projects.

Secretary Report

Wayne welcomed Debbie Stern as the new secretary.

Committee Reports

Membership – Chris Sullivan was not present to provide the latest VCTC membership count; there were 174 members as of last month.

Construction – Roger Reynolds reported that sign posts to Trestle #7 were repainted, students from the NC school in Asheville planted grass seed along the trail relocation in Damascus, VCTC members will install the new trestle numbering signs once the decision is made how and where to mount them, VCTC members will continue to work on projects identified in Paul Dore's report. Roger also told us he assisted a child who crashed on the trail.

Events – Chris Lindeman reported that VCTC has events planned for 3 weekends of the Virginia Highlands Festival: Club booth at the trailhead on July 24 and August 6, and the Legend Ride starting at 8 AM on July 23. She asked for volunteers' participation in these activities.

Publicity – Wayne Miller passed around an article about Lawrence Dye and the opening of Alvarado Station.

Nominating – Wayne thanked the Nominating Committee members for getting the new officers elected.

State of the Trail – Lawrence Dye reported on the condition of the trail and that the 34 mile marker was replaced near Trestle 47. Members discussed the need to get accurate mileage corrections for the next publication of Ed Morgan and Ed Davis's book, the Creeper Trail Companion, and the sign at mile marker 1 that explains the discrepancy between old and new mile markers (old mile markers mark the distance to the original Depot (now the Arts Depot downtown) while the new mile markers installed by VCTC mark the distance to the current Abingdon trailhead). Lawrence reported on the work underway on many trestles by contractors; they are making repairs first to the substructures and then will return to repair decking and handrails. Lawrence reported that he has ridden 160,166 miles to date on the Creeper Trail.

Guests and Partners

Trail Advisory Board – Wayne Miller reported that the next meeting is scheduled for July 6, 2011 and that he plans to attend.

Town of Abingdon – no representative(s) present.

Town of Damascus – no representative(s) present.

USFS – no representative(s) present.

Trail Neighbors – Neighbors Frieda and Bonnie attended.

Program

Link Elmore gave attendees a tour of the new and improved VCTC website that was launched May 10, 2011. Features include a full redesign with Google tracking software, including a feature that tracks the number of visitors to the website and where they're from, along with Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and e Tapestry links. He reported that people are using the website as a resource for trail information and that the site has risen to the top of the list for Google search results for 'Virginia Creeper Trail'. Other information on the website include newsletters, meeting minutes, VCTC bylaws, an events calendar, maps, an elevation profile, news and press releases, and a page devoted to Lawrence "The Legend" Dye. He asked for help writing articles to be included on special topics pertaining to activities on and facts about the Creeper Trail. He passed around a sign-up list with some suggested topics, including biking, hiking, horseback riding, running, fishing, etc.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM by VCTC President Wayne Miller.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Stern