

**Virginia Creeper Trail Club**  
**General Membership Meeting**  
7 PM, October 26, 2011  
Washington County Public Library

Present: Charles Barry, Tim Boyle, Jane Caldwell, Eliot Cannon, W. J. Cober, Lawrence Dye, Link Elmore, Eleanor Grasselli, Bob Horsch, Chris Lindeman, Steve Lindeman, Anne Maio, Greg Meade, Wayne Miller, Roger Reynolds, Jack Sklepowicz, Debbie Stern, Kevin Worley

**General Business / President's Report – Wayne Miller**

- VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 7 PM.
- The minutes of the August 31, 2011 meeting were approved with no corrections. Link Elmore motioned for approval, Bob Horsch seconded.
- Wayne discussed the past year's Club accomplishments which included the following:
  - Trail survey completed,
  - Cleaned culverts and ditches,
  - Cleaned and waxed 25 interpretive signs,
  - Cleaned signs and painted posts of 'Pass on Left' signs,
  - Built and installed 4 new memorial benches,
  - Installed 2 new interpretive signs,
  - Bought and installed 92 trestle numbers (\$2,200 plus hardware),
  - Relocated 1/8 mile of trail and seeded edges in Damascus,
  - Painted and cleaned SST's at Green Cove and Straight Branch,
  - Bought and installed new large maps in Abingdon and Damascus,
  - Planting trees as a screen at sewer plant (30 apple trees),
  - New website developed and online,
  - New brochures designed (out soon),
  - Provided fundraising basket for the Library at Tisket Tasket Fundraiser (\$280),
  - Gave \$3,500 to Damascus for various in-town projects along the trail,
  - Gave \$5,000 to Abingdon for construction of Alvarado pavilion and gravel,
  - Pledged \$5,000 for view-shed protection (Eliot Cannon's letter).
- Wayne also discussed the events that the Club coordinated or supported:
  - Trail cleanup – 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in April,
  - Supported 'Hit the Trail for Hunger' – April EFIA fundraiser (over \$10,000 raised),
  - Plumb Alley Day,
  - Earth Day,
  - Trail Days,
  - Supported National Trail Days Conference,
  - Highlands Festival – Ride with the Legend,
  - River Cleanup – 8/12/11,
  - Club Picnic – 9/25/11.
- Wayne expressed the need for a volunteer to serve as Program Coordinator, asked for help lining up speakers for upcoming meetings in 2012, and reported that Roger Reynolds will be stepping down as Construction Supervisor.

**Tornado / Storm Damage Report**

Kevin Worley, Director of Abingdon Parks and Recreation:

- Trestles 11&12 – gravel is needed to top the area, they are working out access, and plan to start in 6 weeks.
- Trestle 12 – Sycamore tree has been removed as it had grown into the timbers and was damaging the trestle.

- Alvarado Station Park – shelter is up, the fire ring, grill, and covered picnic table have been installed, most of stumps have been removed.
- The Park is intended to be a green space along the trail to draw people for recreational activities.
- Trestle 7 – Tysinger and Hampton was chosen to develop conceptual trestle replacement design options with associated cost estimates for construction and make a presentation of this information at a future Town Council meeting. The project budget has been determined by the insurance recovery amount. Design considerations include limited access to the site, recent trestle replacements by the USFS, and the original design of the original Trestle 7. Desired completion of the replacement trestle is planned for late 2012.

#### **Vice President's Report – Eliot Cannon**

- Eliot wrote a letter on September 25, 2012 pledging the Club's support to prevent development on the trail to protect the view shed.

#### **Treasurer's Report – Greg Meade**

- Greg reported that the VCTC had a cash balance of \$39,714; recent expenditures included \$5,000 to the Town of Abingdon and \$3,500 to the Town of Damascus.
- Greg reported that the grant expires at the end of 2011. There are still some small trail sections that need resurfacing which have been added to the 2012 project list.

#### **Secretary's Report – Debbie Stern**

Nothing to report.

#### **Committee Reports**

Membership – Chris Sullivan reported that there were over 200 VCTC members from 13 states at last count.

Construction – Roger Reynolds presented a summary of hours worked by volunteers in 2012:

- March – 34.25 hrs,
- April – 204.5 hrs (109 hrs for annual cleanup and 42 hrs work on deficiencies listed in Paul Dory's report),
- May – 47.75 hrs (26 hrs cleaning and painting SSR at Straight Branch),
- June – 37.5 hrs (16 hrs supporting Asheville HS volunteers and 12 hrs scrubbing SST at Green Cove),
- July – 3.0 hrs,
- August – 129.4 hrs (92.5 hrs installing new bridge number signs),
- September – 0 hrs,
- October – 6.0 hrs,
- 2012 TOTAL: 462.5 hrs

Events – Chris Lindeman reported that she needs help coordinating events in 2012 and that there would be a Trestle 7 dedication event. Wayne added that it would be a good idea to have a new interpretive sign at Trestle 7 to inform trail users of the before and after history of the trestle.

Publicity – Link Elmore reported that the new Club website is getting a considerable number of visitors, with over 10,000 visits last month. Each website visitor is spending about 4 minutes, so they're spending time and finding information on the trail. Activity peaked with the past fall leaf season. He reported that new stationery has been ordered. Link discussed the need for a study of trail use and economic value to the area, and a proposal from Virginia Tech's Economic Development Studio students to measure the impact of the VCT in Damascus. The proposal included surveys for business owners and trail users to gather relevant information.

Nominating – Nothing to report.

State of the Trail – Lawrence Dye reported that he has ridden 164,355 miles to date on the Creeper Trail. He asked Kevin Worley if the trail would be closed at Trestle 7 during construction, but Kevin said that would have to be determined based on many factors. Lawrence reported that the maps have been reinstalled in Alvarado (thanks to Kevin Worley's crew). Lawrence also reported that there will be an article in an upcoming issue of Southern Living on the VCT.

## **Guests and Partners**

Trail Advisory Board – Wayne Miller reported that the next meeting is scheduled Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at the Abingdon Town Hall.

Town of Abingdon – Kevin Worley reported that the Watauga VDOT grant request from Congressman Griffith to the Chairman of the Federal Transportation Board was going out tomorrow. Many letters were attached as documentation of widespread support for the Watauga project from people from 7 different states.

Town of Damascus – no representative(s) present.

USFS – W.J. Cober reported that all planned trail projects were completed. These projects included structural work to increase trestle longevity and residing White Top Station. He reported that they had 5 volunteers riding the trail to help with trail problems, injuries and accidents. He said there are typically about 2 accidents per week on the trail, with one life flight from Green Cove this year. Wayne commented on the trestle approaches and discussed Paul Dore's sketches as an option for improvement. W.J also reported that he also has some options for trestle approach improvements that will be under consideration. He said that projects for 2012 include painting White Top siding, replacing some boards and painting at Green Cove Station, and a grant from VDOT for transportation enhancement will allow the total replacement of Trestles 35 & 36, along with trail realignment. VDOT also plans to close off the street at the caboose in Damascus.

Trail Neighbors – no representative(s) present.

## **Program**

Wayne Miller asked the group to suggest ideas for 2012 potential projects:

- Bags to Benches – for every 10,000 bags a bench can be produced,
- Put out bags for recycling cans and bottles,
- Design a cycling jersey in addition to our Club T-shirt,
- Resurface the connector path behind Sun Dog Outfitters,
- Ed to build 2 benches for the park in Damascus for the Town to install,
- Resurface by the garage, pool and caboose,
- Improve Trestle 23 and/or 24 approaches,
- Donation for Damascus Library,
- Trestle 7 dedication,
- Economic impact study,
- Improve the trail section that gets muddy by Wye Park,
- Do a retrospective study of trail injuries at JMH ER starting 1/1/12 for 1 year and possibly longer; study what happened, where and why,
- Hold an event where bike helmets are given away to kids,
- Paint a mural on the I-81 underpass,
- Engage students from local schools to write articles for the newsletter,
- Initiative to improve cell phone/WI-FI coverage on the trail; BVU may bury a cable to provide service to Taylor's Valley, so this may help improve coverage.

Creeper Trail clocks were presented to Ed Ledvina for all his hard work building benches and Debbie Stern.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM by VCTC President Wayne Miller.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Stern