

**Virginia Creeper Trail Club**  
**General Membership Meeting**  
7 PM, March 28, 2012  
Abingdon Town Hall

Present: Jane Caldwell, Eliot Cannon, Kevin Costello, Lawrence Dye, Link Elmore, Judith Foster, Jim Grace, Eleanor Grasselli, Patty Greany, Margaret Gregg, Larry Harrison, Bob Horsch, Garrett Jackson, Doug Levin, Stacey Levin, Chris Lindeman, Steve Lindeman, Anne Maio, Dean McCall, Marsha McGovern, Greg Meade, Sharon Miller, Wayne Miller, Mary Moffatt, Roger Reynolds, Sara Schell, Anna Sherrill, Debbie Stern, Jeff Van Cleef, Kevin Worley

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

- VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 7 PM.
- There were no general membership meeting minutes to be approved; the VCTC Board meeting minutes from 2/27/12 were approved earlier.
- Wayne reported the following news and information:
  - Introduced the following individuals:
    - Margaret Gregg, guest speaker for this evening's program on her 2011 bicycle trip in Italy,
    - Kevin Worley, Director of Parks and Recreation, Town of Abingdon,
    - Kevin Costello, Director of Tourism, Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau.
  - Welcomed Jane Caldwell back after her absence due to health issues. Jane thanked Club members for their prayers and cards.
  - The United Way of Washington Co. is planting trees along the Virginia Creeper Trail at Glenrochie Country Club. This is where the April 2011 tornado uprooted most of the mature trees, destroying the shade canopy.
  - Thanked Garrett Jackson for arranging the meeting space at the Abingdon Town Hall for this meeting.
  - Asked for volunteers to paint at Green Cove and Whitetop Stations. The date will likely be in May.
  - A new bench was installed in a shady area in Wye Park.
  - Sharon Miller offered VCTC ball caps at a discount for tonight's meeting.
  - Emory & Henry partnership project was underway with interviews of 13 individuals with VCT connections planned. Dr. Kasoma and students from E&H will be reporting on the project at the April 2012 meeting.
  - Some of the rough trestle approaches continue to cause safety concerns. Steve Rainey, a student intern from E&H, is designing a ramp that could be used to improve trestle approaches of concern.

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

- A letter of support for protecting the trail view shed was written by Eliot Cannon and sent to the Washington County Board on behalf of VCTC. The County passed a protection easement program that is voluntary for landowners.

**Treasurer's Report – Greg Meade**

- Greg reported that the VCTC had a cash balance of \$34,683; recent expenditures included money for grant expenses, trail maintenance and improvement, and website redesign.
- Greg reported that the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation grant extension expired 2/29/12. The VCTC was awarded up to \$70,000 on this grant and spent only \$32,000. Greg and Link Elmore are completing the final report for submission to the DCR in Richmond and anticipate a final grant reimbursement of \$17,000. The Club completed 95% of the trail improvement work for only 45% of the estimated cost by completing the work with Club resources and volunteers instead of contracting it out. Total volunteer time dedicated to completing grant work is estimated to be over 300 hours.
- Bob Horsch made a motion to donate \$5,000 to the Town of Damascus to support the new library building fund. The library plans include restrooms, internet service, a library and a visitors' center. It was reported that the Town of Damascus needs to raise over \$180,000 to complete the project. Link Elmore seconded the motion; the motion was carried unanimously by meeting attendees.

## **Committee Reports**

Membership – Chris Sullivan was not in attendance, but VCTC membership is reported to be ~ 200.

Construction – Wayne Miller reported that the Club plans to install new benches, clean and wax interpretive signs, paint the SST's (sweet smelling toilets), and build benches at the new pavilion in Alvarado.

Events – Chris Lindeman asked for volunteers for Trail Cleanup and Earth Day. She also briefly discussed the other events planned for this year and passed around signup sheets for volunteering.

Publicity & Website Updates – Link Elmore reported that the new Club website is getting a considerable number of visitors per month. He reported that the web store is open for purchasing merchandise. Sharon Miller has agreed to manage the merchandise and orders. Link also reported that he has placed the report on the VCTC website that was written by Virginia Tech grad students. This report contains information on economic development and tourism in Damascus, including interviews with bike shops, restaurants, and bed & breakfast establishments. This report will be useful in the future for writing grant applications.

Nominating – Nothing to report.

State of the Trail – Nothing to report.

## **Guests and Partners**

Trail Advisory Board – Wayne Miller reported that the board met on 3/14/12 with property owners and neighbors.

### Town of Abingdon

Kevin Worley reported the following news and information:

- He is running advertisements in national magazines for local tourism. Charlotte, NC is a large market for local tourism.
- The Martha Washington Inn is now running a bike rental and shuttle service for their guests.
- Town of Abingdon plans to send crews out Monday 4/2/12 to pick up trash bags left from the trail cleanup scheduled on 3/31/12.
- Trestle 7 Replacement: 3 preliminary design drawings were selected from 9 options. Since building an identical trestle replacement would be cost prohibitive, the 3 designs under consideration all combine modern construction technology with traditional design elements. The favored design choice would resemble the original wood trestle but would be shorter than the original (400' vs. 652') with longer berms at the ends. This design would allow cattle to pass underneath so the gates currently in place could be eliminated. The Town of Abingdon would like to get construction underway this year, but there is much to do to complete the required engineering, paperwork, and to work with landowners for site access during construction.
- The Town of Abingdon identified 7 areas of the trail that require repair. They plan to write a grant to help with the cost of this work, which includes timber work on some trestles and ditching that was identified in a 2002 trail engineering study.

Garrett Jackson reported that 5 emergency call boxes will be installed by June 1, 2012. These call boxes would utilize Wi-Fi technology for communication.

Town of Damascus – no representative(s) present.

USFS – Sara Schell reported that there will be a patrol person riding the trail this summer to help with minor injuries and mechanical bike repairs. They also plan to repair some washed out sections of trail below Green Cove Station and do some painting.

Trail Neighbors – no representative(s) present.

**Program** – Margaret Gregg showed a slide presentation of her 2011 bicycle tour of Puglia, Italy.

The next meeting will be held on April 25, 2012 at the Washington County Library in Abingdon.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM by VCTC President Wayne Miller.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Stern