

Virginia Creeper Trail Club Meeting
August 28, 2013
Washington County Public Library

Present: Kevin Costello, Myrl Dunham, Lawrence Dye, Eleanor Grasselli, Gerry Henninger, Bob Horsch, Chris Lindeman, Anne Maio, Lee Massicotte, Sandy Massicotte, Wayne Miller, Anna Sherrill, Debbie Stern, Chris Sullivan, Jeff VanCleaf,
Guests: W.J. Cober

VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

President's Report—Wayne Miller

- Wayne played the song *Virginia Creeper Line* from the "Rock Bottom Bluegrass Band" compact disc.
- The Minutes from our previous club meeting of 26 June 2013 were approved on-line.
- Wayne recently gave a presentation about the VCT to the ElderSpirit community. As part of the presentation, he played the VCT historic video and provided them a copy of the DVD.
- The August 3rd Ride with the Legend was successful. A total of 31 riders began at the trail head, three joined later, and 17 made it to the top. Chris Lindeman worked the public relations booth at the trail head to raise awareness and funds but unfortunately unlike previous years, the Steam Engine was not open.
- Sadly, a male bike rider who had reported chest pains, died on August 9 as the result from a heart condition. He died while being transported from the VCT to Johnston Memorial Hospital.
- The next VCTC event is the annual picnic on September 29th at Alvarado Station.
- We will not have a VCTC meeting in October due to the Library remodeling, but the Board will meet.
- Thanks to Chris Sullivan and W.J. Cober for their hard work and dedication fighting the forest fires out West and in Alaska.
- Due to the tiered fee structure of the eTapestry software used for membership records, Amy and Chris Sullivan will remove historic non active records. This action will maintain a lower cost to the VCTC.
- Construction activities this year include (i) build and install two memorial benches, (ii) painted two signs for Whitetop Station, (iii) painted the name on Green Cove Station and due to requirements to maintain the historic significance, the work required a painting contractor expense of \$175.00, (iv) design of stabilizer ramp for trestle transitions, and (v) provided crush gravel to the USFS for grade work over BVU's coarse gravel.
- Event activities this year include (i) April 6th trail clean up, (ii) April 20th Hit the Trail for Hunger, (iii) April 20th Earth Day, (iv) May 18 and 19 Trail Days, (v) May 25 Plumb Alley Day, (vi) August 3rd Highlands Festival Ride with the Legend, and (vii) September 29th VCTC Picnic.
- The next Trail Advisory board meeting is 11 September in Damascus.

Treasurer's Report—Gerry Henninger

The cash balance is \$37,946.32. While this is a very healthy balance, the VCTC is experiencing a current deficit net income from board approved and necessary expenditures such as the 50 tons of gravel, wooden train whistles, hire a painting contractor, along with normal monthly expenses. The only funds held in reserve was the \$10,000 that was approved during the VCTC April meeting but this reserve was removed through the USFS timely action of securing their emergency funds.

State of the Trail—Lawrence "the Legend" Dye

Construction of the replacement for Trestle #7 has commenced. Many of the concrete footers are poured and are curing. It is anticipated that all footers will be complete by October. The gravel on the temporary safety bypass is loose and needs attention; bike riders should walk and not ride the bypass until remedied.

The weed growth around the Watauga parking lot needs cutting. Wayne Miller volunteered to cut it.

USFS—W.J. Cober

- There will be a celebration of National Public Lands Day on September 28 from 10:00AM to 2:00PM at the USFS Mount Rogers headquarters.
- Thanks to the VCTC for providing the crush gravel that the USFS spread on top of BVU's large gravel.
- The infamous mud hole on the trail near Taylor's Valley has been resolved and included about 500 feet of trail and ditch work. Grading that included large gravel topped with crush gravel should keep the mud hole from returning.
- Graded and graveled the transitions at Trestle 38 and 39.

Publicity & Website Updates—Kevin Costello

- Kevin is willing and is able to upload content to the VCTC website.
- The Virginia Tourism Corporation has awarded the \$10,000 grant for the Marketing Leverage Program to the VCTC to develop a new brochure and place advertisements in various outlets. It is a dollar-for-dollar match; both the Town of Damascus and Town of Abingdon have paid their portion. Graphic designers have commenced initial work on the brochure and when available, Kevin will have a draft for VCTC consideration. As a stop gap, Kevin has printed copies of the old brochure and they are available at the Abingdon Visitors Center.
- Kevin has fielded phone calls from numerous regional newspapers and magazines and has provided pictures and information. If articles materialize, he will link them to the VCTC website.
- The Town of Abingdon has released the RFQ for refurbishment on their historical properties, one of which is the Finley House, the future home of the VCTC in cooperation with the Town of Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau. Once selected and awarded, a construction company will build out the interior; time frame is perhaps early Spring. Potential use opportunities after construction include ideas such as (i) VCT orientation center with a large screen television showing various videos, (ii) tourism information booth, (iii) sell VCTC merchandise, (iv) store VCTC maintenance equipment, (v) restrooms. Hours and staffing will need to be discussed and worked together.
- Several weeks ago on Bing, a photo of a VCT trestle was "photo of the week".

Trail Neighbors and Others

- Graffiti was spray painted on the I-81 overpass. A broken branch from an apple tree overhangs the trail near the trail head.
- The Town of Damascus has repaired the Trestle 16 erosion issue by cutting slots in the deck boards to divert water from flowing off of the trestle and onto the trail.

Misc

- Jeff VanCleaf discussed the trail cookie recipe he created for the VCTC and provided cookie samples to all attendees. He suggested that cookies and/or the mix of dry ingredients could be sold at events.
- Chris Lindeman has been trying to confirm picnic caterer reservations with Alvarado Station but to no avail. Lawrence Dye and Wayne Miller will contact Marc Wilkinson to make the arrangements. Otherwise, Chris has an alternate plan in place.
- Don't forget to vote daily for the VCT to be the 8th Wonder of the World. Votes are accepted through 30 September on the website www.virtualtourist.com.
- Completion of the replacement of Trestle #7 is estimated for February/March 2014.
- Please send pictures and articles for the newsletter to Debbie Stern.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff VanCleaf, VCTC secretary