

Virginia Creeper Trail Club Meeting
March 26, 2014
Damascus Public Library

Present: Eliot Cannon, Dick Dannhardt, Myrl Dunham, Lawrence Dye, Eleanor Grasselli, Gerry Henninger, Bob Horsch, George Kelly, Chris Lindeman, Steve Lindeman, Anne Maio, Dean McCall, Wayne Miller, Lisa Quigley, Roger Reynolds, Anna Sherrill, Debbie Stern, Jeff VanCleaf, Margaret Gregg.

Guests: J. Brady Adcock, David Burwell, W.J. Cober, Pat Dannhardt, David Donovan, Janice Donovan, Doug Goss, Gary Greer, Kitty Henninger, Tom Horsch, Bill Lawson, Sandy Lawson, Marsha Manuel, French Moore, Sara Schell.

VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 6:59pm.

President's Report—Wayne Miller

- The rebuilding of Trestle #7 is nearing completion. The Town of Abingdon will host a ribbon cutting ceremony on the anniversary of the destructive tornado, April 28. The ceremony begins at 2:00.
- The thirty (30) Bluebird nesting boxes between Abingdon and MM 12 have been cleaned and are ready for another year.
- The October 2013 VCTC board members meeting highlighted three areas of concern: (i) the VCTC needs a strong and steady income of funds, (ii) membership improvement for both quantity and following up when annual dues need to be paid, and (iii) more VCTC volunteer support at club events.
- The VCTC donated and spent about \$23,000 in years 2011 and 2012 across many projects and organizations. We need to consider 2014 expenditures for worthy projects and organizations but maintain a floor reserve balance, such as \$20,000, for emergency expenditures. VCTC financials reflect deficit spending; be thinking about ways to improve income.
- Wayne passed around a thank you card and picture the VCTC received from students of the Abingdon High School Panicello Trail Project, acknowledging the VCTC donation and how it helped their organization and the Panicello Trail.
- Wayne will meet with Amy and Chris Sullivan regarding membership management software eTapestry and its ability to provide yearly renewal reminder notifications.
- The Nominating Committee is requested to begin searching for Officers and Directors for election this year and for President. This is Wayne's third Term as President and he will be stepping aside.
- The VCT Advisory Board that meets four times a year, met March 12 at Alvarado Station. The Alvarado Station will be used for community events and ceremonies, such as weddings.
- The Town Of Abingdon is still negotiating with the land owners for land to create a new parking lot at the Watauga crossing.
- The Town of Damascus desires to install signage along the VCT for bike shops and other businesses. The VCT Advisory Board suggested that the Town of Damascus seek guidance from the US Forest Service and that such signage will meet the USFS standards.
- The VCTC and the Town Of Abingdon are considering installing an interpretive sign at Trestle #7 to commemorate the original Trestle with a photo and narrative.
- At the suggested request of Eleanor Grasselli, the VCTC and Town of Damascus are working to install an interpretive sign commemorating the water tower which was critical for the steam train transportation.

Events—Chris Lindeman

- Chris passed out copies of the 2014 VCTC Events calendar. The next event is the VCT clean up on April 5. Meet at 9:00AM at either the Abingdon Trail head or Damascus Food City parking lot. Chris passed around a signup sheet for volunteers to clean up trash on specific VCT segments.
- 2014 Events to include: April 26 Earth Day at Field-Penn House; April 28 Official opening of Trestle #7; May 7 Trail Days; May 24 Plum Alley Day; June 7 National Trail Day; August 2 Ride with the Legend; September 28 VCTC Picnic.

State of the Trail—Lawrence "the Legend" Dye

- The next "Ride With The Legend" is August 2 during the Virginia Highlands Festival and will begin at the Abingdon Trail head at 8:00AM for the ascent to the top of the VCT at White Top and return to Abingdon.
- Lawrence has now passed 180,000 miles riding his bicycle on the VCT.

USFS—W.J. Cober

- The funding to replace Trestle #35 and Trestle #36 has been secured. Pre-bid activities have commenced. The trail will be closed during replacement but closures will be limited where possible. Details will be determined.
- The estimate to repair Trestle #27 is \$4,000 to \$6,000. VCT traffic can potentially be routed around this trestle during repair activities. The USFS is trying to secure funding and accomplish the repair this year.
- Green Cove Station will open and celebrate the season on April 4-6.
- White Top Station will open and celebrate the season on April 11-13.
- The Green Cove Station 100th Birthday celebration will be August 3. Also, look for more music, art, photography displays, and other activities to celebrate 100 years. Spread the word!

Trail Neighbors and Others

- A big thanks to the VCTC for removing the two large dead Aspen trees along the VCT in Damascus.
- Belle Avery still has plans to have a museum at Alvarado Station.
- The restaurant at Alvarado Station is now open Friday through Monday.

Misc

- Gerry Henninger suggested that Lawrence Dye be the first person to ride across Trestle #7 at the ribbon cutting ceremony on April 28. This suggestion is being considered by the Town Of Abingdon.
- There are historic instances of break-ins at VCT parking lots; any future problems will be addressed through coordination between law enforcement agencies.
- The Finlay House is being remodeled and will be shared by the VCTC and the Town Of Abingdon. It is slated to be available for current viewing status on April 28, the opening of Trestle #7.

Program – Dr. French Moore spoke about the history of the Virginia Creeper Trail

Dr. Moore is a founding father of the VCT. His vision, dedication, and coordination with others helped create the VCT.

Dr. Moore quoted a few excerpts from the book "The Virginia Creeper Trail Companion, Nature and History Along Southwest Virginia's National Recreation Trail" by authors Edward H. Davis and Edward B. Morgan. Dr. Moore enlightened the audience on the trials and tribulations of establishing the VCT such as (i) securing the funding for the land and trestles, (ii) negotiating with numerous parties for funding, land, trestle purchases, and contracts, (iii) overcoming setbacks of trestle fire damages, and (iv) converting the trestles from rail traffic to pedestrian traffic. His wife has so eloquently quipped: the birth of his Baby took nine years of hard labor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff VanCleaf, VCTC secretary