

Virginia Creeper Trail Club Meeting
April 30, 2014
Washington County Public Library

Present: Carolyn Barry, Charles Barry, Jane Caldwell, I.B. Dent, Myrl Dunham, Lawrence Dye, Margaret Gregg, Gerry Henninger, Bob Horsch, Chris Lindeman, Steve Lindeman, Amanda Livingston, Anne Maio, Dean McCall, Greg Meade, Bunny Medeiros, Wayne Miller, Lisa Quigley, Roger Reynolds, Anna Sherrill, Richard Smith, Debbie Stern, Chris Sullivan, Jeff VanCleaf, Bob Widner.

Guests: W.J. Cober, Gerald Davis, Mary Davis, Kitty Henninger, Sharon Miller, Tim Williams

VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 6:58pm.

President's Report—Wayne Miller

- Wayne opened the meeting with viewing the recently filmed and published video of the VCT by the Weather Channel Great Outdoors series. View online: <http://www.weather.com/video/great-outdoors-virginia-creeper-trail-47581>
- Local artist and VCTC member Margaret Gregg displayed handcrafted bracelets for sale in four sizes made from recycled bicycle chains.
- The VCTC has recently added a membership category for businesses. A local bike shop and the Alvarado Station are the first members. Spread the word to potential business members.
- The VCTC has received approval for our site location at the Plumb Alley event on May 24th. It is the same site as last year, on the corner of College and Plumb Alley, right behind the Barter Theater.
- The Abingdon Vineyard and Winery has donated their March and April wine tasting proceeds to the VCTC.
- The Harvest Table restaurant will donate ten percent of their June 5th dinner proceeds to the VCTC. Help support the VCTC and enjoy dinner from 5:00 to 9:00 on June 5th. The VCTC will have an information display table. Note: Post meeting information changed the date from June 5th to **June 12th**.
- Due to relocating away from the area, VCTC Vice President Elliot Cannon has resigned.
- The Minutes from our previous club meeting of 26 March 2014 were approved on-line.
- Trestle #7 is rebuilt and officially opened! The April 28th opening ceremony included the "ribbon cutting" by first rider Lawrence Dye.
- The VCT is the latest inductee into the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy Hall of Fame. View online: <http://community.railstotrails.org/blogs/trailblog/archive/2014/04/30/2014-rail-trail-hall-of-fame-virginia-creeper.aspx>

Treasures Report—Gerry Henninger

- The cash balance is \$42,052.03 as of 27 April 2014.
- The VCTC donated and spent about \$23,000 in years 2011 and 2012 across many projects and organizations. Wayne Miller led and facilitated a discussion on potential uses of club funds for 2014. Five funding categories were discussed:
 - Trail Maintenance and Improvements - Funds can be reserved for the emergency future needs in lieu of immediate disbursements. This assures the funds will not be comingled with the recipient's non-VCT projects. These funds would assist the US Forest Service and the Towns of Abingdon and Damascus. An example for this funding category is the repair of Trestle #16 deck boards by the Town of Damascus. The materials (lumber and fasteners) cost \$189 and since this trail segment is under the USFC, the funding would be disbursed from the USFS reserve. Another example is VCTC projects, currently undetermined, but could include projects such as an interpretive sign at the water tower project in Damascus.
 - Marketing and Education - Funds can be reserved for the brochure and/or website development for tourism. Another example for this funding category is the Abingdon Main Street Mural. Amanda Livingston, a board member of the nonprofit organization Abingdon Main Street ("AMS"), provided a brief overview of the AMS organization and the mural project and solicited financial support. AMS's mission is to revitalize Abingdon's historic district, which includes the start of the VCT. AMS's goal is to improve the livability of, and increase tourist visitation to, Abingdon. AMS is responsible for the mural which began in 2013 and is slated for completion later this year. The mural will include images associated with the VCT including (i) a bicyclist, (ii)

the train engine at the VCT railhead, and (iii) the Virginia creeper vine. The VCTC will be noted for providing funding support.

- Merchandise - Reorder and maintain VCTC inventory merchandise for sale at events. Wayne suggest a funding reserve of \$2,000. If additional funds become necessary, the VCTC would discuss and vote.
- Virginia Tate Conservation Easement ("VTCE") - Chris Sullivan provided a brief overview of the VTCE project. Ms. Virginia Tate desires to protect from development in perpetuity, part of her 334 acres that borders the VCT near Whitetop. The VTCE would create an approximate 100 foot view shed corridor for over one half mile along the VCT. Chris suggested the VCTC set aside \$3,000 for VTCE cost such as fees for land appraisal and attorneys. The VCTC would disburse the funds as a cost reimbursement only upon successful completion and deed recording of the conservation easement, slated for 2014. A USFC and VCTC joint press release at completion would raise awareness and perhaps other such land owners would consider similar voluntary actions.
- Panicello Trail Development (Abingdon High School) - Last year, the VCTC provided \$1,000 to this outdoor learning laboratory project. Wayne read an appreciation card signed by the students. The card noted the funds were used for items such as trail safety, creating pathways, landscaping fabric, bluebird boxes, and pollination strips. Wayne suggested the VCTC provide \$500 to this project.
- Without too much difficulty, Gerry will be able to track and maintain these financial reserves or "set asides".
- I.B. Dent made a motion to affirm Wayne's 20104 funding recommendations. Charles Barry seconded the motion. The VCTC vote carried the motion as follows:

Trail Maintenance and Improvements -

Town of Abingdon - \$3000 (set aside)

Town of Damascus - \$2000 (set aside)

US Forest Service - \$2000 (set aside)

VCTC projects - \$2000 (set aside)

Marketing and Education -

Brochure/website development for tourism - \$1500 (set aside)

Abingdon Main Street Mural - \$1000 (check)

Merchandise - Reorder merchandise items for sale at events - \$2000 (set aside)

Virginia Tate Conservation Easement - \$3000 (set aside)

Panicello Trail Development (Abingdon High School) - \$500 (check)

Membership Committee—Chris Sullivan

The club has 144 current dues paid members. Chris passed around a hard copy for attendees to review their information.

Construction—

Wayne Miller, Jim Mowbray, and Bob Horsch have built two memorial benches. Installation is forthcoming.

Events—Chris Lindeman

- The next event is Trail Days, Saturday May 17th, in Damascus. Volunteers are needed to staff the VCTC tent. Chris will set up the tent Friday afternoon.
- Plumb Alley Day is May 24th. Volunteers are needed to staff the VCTC tent.
- Other 2014 Events to include: August 2 Ride with the Legend; September 28 VCTC Picnic.

Elections for Board Members - Directors

The following three member's term ends May 2014:

Director - Chris Lindeman

Director - Belle Avery

Director - Lawrence Dye

Each of the three members have indicated their willingness to serve another term. Dean McCall made a motion to reelect all three members for another term (2014-2016) as a Director and I.B. Dent seconded the motion. The VCTC vote carried the motion.

Bunny Medeiros volunteered to complete the vacant term of Vice President (ends May 2015).

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 ridden his bicycle 180,580 miles on the VCT.

USFS—W.J. Cober

- The proposals to replace Trestle #35 and Trestle #36 has been received and are under review.
- Wayne reported that Carrie Sparks will lead walk from Whitetop Station to Green Cove Station as part of the 100th Birthday celebration of Green Cove Station.

Town of Damascus—Tim Williams

- Improving trail safety, the repair of the Trestle #16 deck boards is complete.
- Richard Smith reported that activities to memorialize the water tank are proceeding. There are twelve tank pedestals, about seven standing and about 5 that are either partially or fully underground. The Town of Damascus and the VCTC will be solicited to assist with the project; it will require manual labor. Eleanor Grasselli has collected photographs and has draft wording for an interpretive sign.

Misc

- The VCT Advisory Board, consisting of Washington County, Town of Abingdon, Town of Damascus, USFS, VCTC, and trail neighbors, will have its next meeting May 7th.
- Using some of Mike Smith's approximately 1,200 documentary photos of the rebuilding of Trestle #7, Richard Smith plans to put an 80-100 picture slide show together and post on the internet.
- Roger Reynolds reported that the brush clearing project at the intersection of Meade Drive and the VCT is expanding and continuing.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff VanCleaf, VCTC secretary