

Virginia Creeper Trail Club Meeting
March 25, 2015
Washington County Public Library

Present: David Altizer, Tom Boyle, Bo Catron, Dallas Church, Carolyn Church, Kevin Costello, Myrl Dunham, Lawrence Dye, Gerry Henninger, Kitty Henninger, Bob Horsch, George Kelley, Yvonne Koncsol, Chris Lindeman, Rhonda Marshall, Bunny Medeiros, Wayne Miller, Lisa Quigley, Debbie Stern, Mickey Tyler, Jeff VanCleaf

Guests: Joe Tennis

VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

President's Report—Wayne Miller

- The venue for 2015 VCTC monthly meetings will continue to be the Washington County Public Library in Abingdon, the last Wednesday for the months of April, May, June, August, and October. No meeting in July. September 27 is the picnic.
- Wayne has decided to run for the office of President in the May election. Other openings are Vice President.
- The VCTC has hired Lisa Quigley as the Executive Assistant. Lisa has assumed the duties performed by Amy Sullivan as well as growing volunteer support.
- The Town of Abingdon ("TOA") will install new signage on Cumming's street pointing to the VCT, also on SR 58 to pointing to Alvarado Station.
- The VCTC is the receiving and managing authority for all VCT memorial requests. The VCTC is receiving memorial donations on behalf of Mr. Taylor Read, July 20, 1991 - March 7, 2015. All donations are segregated from general funds and donors receive a letter of acknowledgement from the VCTC.
- A few examples of recent VCTC expenditures and activities include (i) funding repairs and replacement of two park benches, (ii) funding for materials to extend the wing wall of Trestle #25, and (iii) assisting with remodeling the home of Richard Smith who is under medical recovery from an accidental fall while working on his home.
- Volunteer support is critical to the success of the VCTC or other such organizations. For example, Beth Merz USFS, has noted that for the approximately 400 trail miles under her cognizance, volunteers donate the equivalent of 19 staff years.
- At the VCT Trail Advisory Board meeting of March 11, signs for Rail-To-Trail Hall of Fame were distributed to trail owners (TOA, Town of Damascus, USFS) for installation on the VCT and VCT structures. The next meeting is May 13.
- Lawrence "the Legend" Dye has ridden over 184,000 miles on the VCT.
- A \$500 maximum debit card is needed for Lisa Quigley for small VCTC expenditures. Amy Sullivan had such provision. Tom Boyle made a motion for the VCTC to provide Lisa with a debit card. Bob Horsch seconded the motion. The VCTC vote carried the motion.

Events—Chris Lindeman and Wayne Miller

- The first event of 2015 is the Trail Clean Up, April 11. Meet at Abingdon Trailhead or Damascus Food City parking lot at 9:00AM. Chris passed around a sign up list for attendees to select a section to clean.
- Chris provided attendees a copy of the 2015 Events calendar. A correction was noted for "Ride With The Legend": August 1 in lieu of August 8.
- The Rails-To-Trails Conservancy will have a nationwide event, March 28, to promote trail usage. The TOA, VCTC, and businesses will be supporting this event. Wayne will lead a walk beginning at 9:00AM at the Abingdon Trailhead at The Virginia Creeper Trail Welcome Center ("VCTWC"). The VCTWC will be available as a "soft opening".
- The VCTC will serve as a host for a Bike Virginia rest stop in Abingdon on June 26. Approximately 1,700 riders are anticipated. The TOA is in initial plans to have the event at the Abingdon Farmers Market with entertainment, food, water, information about Abingdon, etc.

Treasure's Report—Gerry Henninger

- The latest financial statements were emailed to the board members and available in hardcopy for attendees.
- The balance remains healthy (\$44,246.45 as of March, 22 2015).

- Gerry elaborated on the activities regarding memorials and those of Mr. Taylor Read. The VCTC truly appreciates these wonderful memorial gifts.

Executive Assistant—Lisa Quigley

- The membership management database software, eTapestry, has unutilized potential that could enhance the membership experience. Efforts to expand eTapestry capabilities are in process.
- The VCTC has 142 members; updates and multi-list consolidation efforts continue.
- Merchandise will soon be available online and eventually at the VCTWC.
- Updates to the VCTC website to make it more user friendly are in process.
- A training program is being developed for VCTC volunteers that will staff the VCTWC.

Publicity—Kevin Costello

- The brochure is complete and is available through a wide variety of tourist/visitor centers. Advertising leads have generated requests for the brochure; the TOA has mailed two large batches (1,400 and 1,200) to requestors. Kevin anticipates increased volume of visitors seeking outdoor recreation activities in Abingdon and Washington County.
- Efforts required under the grant are 80-90% complete.
- Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine is seeking nominations for "Backyard Badass". Lawrence Dye has been nominated.
- The TOA is working closer with the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy and anticipates benefits this year stemming from the VCT 2014 induction into the Hall of Fame.
- The webmaster for the VCTC website has provided a notification to cease support. The VCTC will establish a committee to investigate alternatives.
- The cleanup and remodeling of the VCTWC second floor is proceeding. The final opening of the VCTWC is anticipated for June/July.

Program – Mr. Joe Tennis, author

Joe Tennis presented excerpts from his latest book, "Virginia Rail Trails: Crossing the Commonwealth," featuring a chapter on the VCT. The chapter covering the VCT is the largest. His exquisite slide show presented numerous pictures of trails throughout Virginia. Joe's engaging and descriptive dialog was packed with details of his research and journeys to these trails and the people involved with the trails.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff VanCleaf, VCTC secretary