

Virginia Creeper Trail Club Meeting
August 26, 2015
Washington County Public Library

Present: Buddy Albro, Sean Albro, May Broylin, Bo Catron, Gerry Davis, Janice Donovan, David Donovan, Myrl Dunham, Lawrence Dye , Frank Frantzen, Laura Georgi, Eleanor Grasselli, Margaret Gregg, Rebecca Harrington, Gerry Henninger, Kitty Henninger, Phillip Hoffer, Bob Horsch, Richard Keman, Stacey Levin, Doug Levin, Chris Lindeman, Anne Maio, Lee Massicotte, Sara Massicotte, Dean McCall, Bunny Medeiros, Wayne Miller, Jim Mowbray, Dene Peterson, Lisa Quigley, Kelly Read, Debbie Stern, Jeff VanCleef, Marsha Wikle

Guests: Gray Buckles

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

President's Report—Wayne Miller

- The Virginia Creeper Trail Welcome Center ("VCTWC") located at the Abingdon rail head, is now open Thursday through Sunday. VCTC volunteers will be needed to staff each day to welcome VCT visitors.
- The VCTC has ordered a pallet of bottled water, branded with the VCTC logo and VCT name, to be sold at the VCTWC.
- Ms. Kelly Read offered the Read family's appreciation to the VCTC for supporting the Taylor Read Memorial Project, especially to Wayne Miller, Lisa Quigley, Kevin Worley, and Sally Johnson for their time and hard working efforts. The dedication day is October 3rd and will include a barbecue lunch and the first annual "Rails to River Ride". A Facebook page is forthcoming.
- Rick Boucher (former Congressman) has donated funds to build a museum at Alvarado Station. Belle Avery, Sally Johnson, and Bettie Johnson are gathering photographs.
- Construction of the new VCTC website has commenced with award of the \$15,000 contract to Mikula Harris, Inc. Sources of funding include \$2,000 Town of Damascus, \$5,000 Town of Abingdon, \$10,000 maximum matching grant to VCTC funds. A big thanks to the Town of Damascus and the Town of Abingdon.
- VCTC membership remains steady. We are seeking ways to efficiently provide renewal reminders to members to hopefully minimize reductions.
- Compliments of Lisa Quigley, VCTC merchandise was available for purchase before and after the meeting.
- The Town of Abingdon is reviewing the bents of Trestle #15. Water erosion has caused the collapse of one bent.
- The next VCT Advisory Board meeting is September 16th. Buddy and Sean Albro will host the meeting at their cottages in Damascus.
- Lawrence has ridden his bicycle 187,000 miles on the VCT.

Treasurers Report—Gerry Henninger

- Gerry offered the Henninger family's appreciation to the VCTC for the many cards, thoughts, and prayers of support to the family for the recent death of a son and brother.
- The latest financial statements were emailed to the VCTC Board and also available in hardcopy for attendees. The balance remains healthy (\$63,076.58 as of August 25, 2015).
- The club continues to receive memorial donations for Mr. Taylor Read, \$13,600 to date.
- The VCTC has executed a contract with a company for a new VCTC website. Although the anticipated cost of \$15,000 is currently captured as an asset to be expensed over three years, the value and accounting methodology may change due to a very recently approved \$10,000 maximum grant from Virginia Tourist Corporation.

Events—Chris Lindeman, Lisa Quigley and Wayne Miller

- The Ride With The Legend event of August 1st was a success: 42 riders departed with Lawrence Dye and more joined at Alvarado and Damascus.
- Volunteers are needed for the Mr. Taylor Read Memorial dedication and the Rails to River Ride. A first shift is needed in the morning at the Abingdon trail head and a second shift in the afternoon at Alvarado for the dedication ceremony at noon. The registration fee is \$20. A tee shirt and lunch will be provided. Sign up rosters were available for attendees, otherwise contact Lisa Quigley.

- The Bike Virginia event of June 26 was a success. Eighteen VCTC volunteers enjoyed supporting the 450 riders. The VCTC provided food and paper products. Donations and reimbursements from Bike Virginia, Food City, Sam's Club, and Kroger resulted in a net positive cash flow to the VCTC. A big thanks to Lisa Quigley for her extraordinary efforts.
- The Outdoor Expo is September 12th at Heartwood. Thanks to the volunteers that signed up to work this event.
- The VCTC picnic begins at 4:30 September 27th at Alvarado Station. Barbeque, slaw, cornbread, and paper products will be provided. Bring a dish and enjoy some good food and camaraderie.

USFS—Gray Buckles and Anne Maio

- VCTC member Mary Davis donated an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) to Green Cove Station. A big thanks to Mary.
- The contract has been awarded to remedy the sagging of Trestle #27. No trail closures are anticipated during construction.
- Three water erosion grates, similar to the grates at Trestle #16, have been ordered and will be installed at various trestles. These will be monitored for effectiveness.
- Mount Rogers Recreational Area will celebrate 50 years during the last week of May 2016. Perhaps the VCTC can offer an event to assist in the celebration such as a speaker, bike ride, etc.
- Public Lands Day is September 19th, celebration at Mount Rogers.

Other

- A recent VCT surface repair located behind Food City in Damascus has resulted in a potential safety concern. The gravel remains loose and is not compacting. The VCTC will notify the Town of Damascus and provide materials (crusher run) if needed.
- It seems this has been a banner year for attendance on the VCT. Higher usage results in increased surface wear and maintenance. The VCTC is ready and available to assist where necessary.

Program – Doug and Stacey Levin, Southwest Virginia Restoration Branch of the Virginia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation ("TACF")

Doug and Stacey provided an extremely informative slide show presentation of this wonderful volunteer organization with a very admirable goal: restore the American Chestnut tree to its original range. From Maine to Georgia, the American Chestnut tree dominated the landscape until 1904 when the spores of the blight began their lethal journey to decimation of the American Chestnut forest and all associated economic vitality. TACF remains on rebirth journey by cross breeding many generations of American and Chinese chestnuts, hopefully only retaining the blight resistance of the Chinese chestnut. The epicenter of this cross breeding program is on the world's largest chestnut breeding farm located in Meadowview, Virginia! There are many locations across our region planted with seedlings that may have enough potential blight resistance. To find out more or how you can help, visit their website: <http://vachestnut.org/>

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff VanCleef, VCTC secretary