

Virginia Creeper Trail Club Meeting
April 27, 2016
Washington County Public Library

Present: Buddy Albro, Sean Albro, John Brenner, Patty Brenner, Jane Caldwell, Gerry Davis, Jennifer Davis, I.B. Dent, Lawrence Dye, Linda Fuller, Gerry Henninger, Kitty Henninger, Phillip Hoffer, Chris Lindeman, Dean, McCall, Wayne Miller, Lisa Quigley, Roger Reynolds, Debbie Stern, Jeff VanCleaf, Marsha Wikle

Guests: Joe Tennis

VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

President's Report—Wayne Miller

- On this day five years ago after the VCTC meeting, the 11 tornados struck Southwest Virginia, one of which destroyed Trestle #7.
- The VCTC project to replace the Green Cove Station porch, flooring, and cargo deck is in the phase of assessing, planning, and securing the materials. A big thanks to Chris Sullivan for helping to overcome the huge challenge to economically acquire kiln dried white oak lumber, size 2" x 8" x 8'. Through his efforts, the VCTC was able to secure the critical lumber. Since the lumber must dry over the coming months, the Spring project schedule will be paused until the Fall.
- Projects completed to date: built two benches and installed one bench.
- All VCTC volunteers need to collect their volunteer hours and report to Lisa Quigley. This helps the club get credit and maintain visibility for the work.
- The VCTC and the VCT Advisory Board continues to focus on safety. Johnston Memorial Hospital has donated \$2,500 to the VCTC to purchase two Automated External Defibrillators ("AED") for locations along the trail. There will be four in total along the trail at Whitetop Station, Green Cove, Alvarado Station, and the VCT Welcome Center.
- The Hemlock trees are being decimated by an invasive Japanese beetle (*Adelges tsugae*), the wooly adelgid. Although pesticides can be placed at the base of each of tree, this is not feasible and not permanent. Scientist have discovered a predator beetle (*Laricobius Osakensis*) that feeds solely on the wooly adelgid and are conducting trial releases of this predator beetle at Shenandoah National Park and other Parks.
- The VCTC will support the Mt. Rogers NRA 50th anniversary celebration. VCTC member Steve Lindeman and USFS Range Technician, Tom Blevins, will lead a May 3rd driving and walking tour "Fairwood Valley Cultural History", the site of the original saw mill and pond. Volunteers are needed to help control traffic and parking.
- Compliments of Lawrence Dye, copies of the free magazine, Blue Ridge Outdoors, were available for attendees. An article of interest to Lawrence is on page 19, "Cutting Coal, The Southeast's Climate Success Story".
- Three styles of hats were provided to attendees for review. A vote by members determined that the VCTC will order two styles in an economical large quantity (48ea) that should be available by the next VCTC meeting.
- Compliments of Lisa Quigley, VCTC merchandise was available for purchase before and after the meeting.
- The Trail Clean Up event on April 2 was a success. Volunteers met at two locations, one at the Trail Head and one at Damascus Food City, to split into teams and enjoy the beautiful day while beautifying the VCT. A big thanks to all volunteers.
- The Opening Day on the Trail event was April 16 at the VCT Welcome Center. Wayne Miller led a nature walk. Chris Lindeman, Lisa Quigley, and Eliza Quigley staffed the VCTC table. A big thanks to all four volunteers!
- The new website is anticipated to be live before the next VCTC meeting.
- VCTC Board member elections is during the May meeting. Three Directors positions (Lawrence Dye, Chris Lindeman, and Belle Avery) are up for election. Each of them have volunteered to run again.
- Lawrence has ridden his bicycle 189,200 miles on the VCT. Lisa Quigley read a few of the Facebook comments that Lawrence received when she posted about him crossing the 189,000 milestone. The estimated total exposure was about 10,000 people!
- Compliments from a VCTC member donation, The Town of Abingdon ("TOA") has installed a water fountain for dogs and humans. It is located at the golf course at Meade Drive.
- Volunteers are needed for two other May events: May 17th Damascus Trail Days and May 28 Plumb Alley Day.
- Volunteers can sign up online (<http://www.hopsandhowlers.com>) for the June 18 event, Hops & Howlers located at the Abingdon Farmers Market. Sign up for second shift for Virginia Creeper Trail Club.

- The next VCT Advisory Board meeting is May 25th.

Treasurers Report—Gerry Henninger

- The same as last month, there have been very few transactions over the previous three months. That is expected to change as the season ensues.
- We have received and posted \$2,500 from Johnston Memorial Hospital for two AEDs.
- The paperwork has been filed and we will commence collecting Virginia sales tax on merchandise beginning May 1, 2016. The tax will be included in the item's retail price.
- The latest financial statements were emailed to the VCTC Board and also available in hardcopy for attendees. The balance remains healthy (\$32,776.30 as of April 25, 2016).
- A piece of Henninger family history regarding a saw mill similar to Fairwood Valley: Gerry's grandfather died in an accident as a sawyer at the American Spruce Company while logging the Mt. Rogers Whitetop area. He had achieved notoriety for his abilities to produce the most lumber per log. The two highest paid hourly positions in the logging industry: the sawyer (#2) and the saw sharpener (#1).

USFS—Sara Abbott

- Addendum note through Wayne Miller: The USFS has been mowing, grading, and spot graveling the VCT from Whitetop to Taylors Valley and are almost complete. Anticipate completion of mowing in June.

Other—Various

- As part of the Mt. Rogers NRA 50th anniversary celebration, VCTC member Marsha Wikle will present the History of the Appalachian Trail and Virginia Creeper in Washington County, on June 3, 5:30 PM –6:30 PM, at the Washington County Public Library in Abingdon.
- The sign on the VCT at the North Carolina line needs to be replaced. Wayne to discuss at the VCT Advisory Board.
- Equestrian droppings should be managed in the same regard as canine droppings. Clean up after your animal. Wayne to discuss at the VCT Advisory Board.
- The restaurant at Alvarado Station will be opening soon under new management.
- O. Winston Link prints are on display at the VCT Welcome Center. Stop by to see them!

Program – Mr. Joe Tennis, author

Joe provided just a few excerpts from his latest and most favorite book, "Along Virginia's Route 58: True Tales from Beach to Bluegrass" and then launched into a slide show chocked full of pictures of past through present. Joe discussed how Route 58 began and evolved into the road it is today. This journey transgressed bits of wild history, ghosts, folk lore, and spicy trivia from the coast to Kentucky! His presentation included topics such as history, scenery, railroads, rail trails, Virginia Beach, beach board walks, Sugar Hollow board walks, Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Trail, White Top Mountain, Cumberland Gap, and of course, the Virginia Creeper Trail! Joe's book can be purchased through Amazon, at the Historical Society of Washington County, and at the VCT Welcome Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff VanCleaf, VCTC secretary