

Virginia Creeper Trail Club Meeting
May 25, 2016
Washington County Public Library

Present: David Altizer, Jane Caldwell, Bo Catron, Gerry Davis, Jennifer Davis, I.B. Dent, Gene Divers, Myrl Dunham, Larry Durham, Lawrence Dye, Eleanor Grasselli, Margaret Gregg, Gerry Henninger, Bob Horsch, Chris Lindeman, Steve Lindeman, Rhonda Marshall, James McDermott, Wayne Miller, Debbie Stern, Jeff VanCleaf, Marsha Wikle

Guests: Beth Merz, Lori Swartworth

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

President's Report—Wayne Miller

- Discussed at the May 25 VCT Advisory Board: The sign on the VCT at the North Carolina line will be replaced. When the VCTC is on the VCT working various projects, signage along the VCT will be reviewed (worn, dilapidated, etc) for replacement. Partnering together, USFS will provide the replacement signage and posts and the VCTC will provide the labor.
- Discussed at the May 25 VCT Advisory Board: Equestrian droppings should be managed in the same regard as canine droppings. Clean up after your animal. Signage will be installed at equestrian entry points along the VCT.
- Discussed at the May 25 VCT Advisory Board: 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 VCTC discussed that these locations will not be opened throughout the year and thus limiting the AED availability. This was also discussed at the VCT Advisory Board with conclusion that the intent is to supplement the response community. Also as a supplement, large size First Aid kits will be located along with these AEDs.
- Johnston Memorial Hospital will provide AED training on June 7th. Time TBD.
- VDOT continues to progress with the alternate VCT at the junction of SR58 and SR91 during the bridge refurbishment project. This alternate trail will provide a safe route underneath the bridge. The plans necessitate 0.2 acres of private land. The land owners will donate the land to the VCTC. The VCTC will provide the land to VDOT. VDOT anticipates project completion in 2018.
- Be on the lookout for a press release regarding the AEDs and the community pulling together to provide a safer experience for trail users.
- Belle Avery is leading the effort to establish an interactive museum at Alvarado Station. In addition to Rich Boucher's \$500 donation, earmarked donations will be managed by the VCTC.
- A revision to the VCTC By-Laws is in review by the Board and when ready, it will be brought to the membership for review and vote.
- Projects completed to date: built two benches, installed one bench, and replaced a bench support leg.
- The USFS experiment to minimize water erosion using a plank wide metal grid positioned at the end of a trestle is promising. The USFS will provide the VCTC with a list (quantity, trestles) and the VCTC will seek to purchase the grids from Walter Keller and provide installation labor.
- Lawrence "The Legend" Dye has ridden his bicycle 189,640 miles on the VCT. Lawrence noted two recent areas of clean up concern: (i) removal of the cut branches from the stream at Trestle #1 and (ii) clear the undergrowth at the interpretive sign for the Live Oak at MM 1. He also noted the logs aside the trail at MM 2 and the tree trunk next to Trestle 6 should be removed.
- The next VCT Advisory Board meeting is July 13th.
- 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. The TOA will be maintaining the restrooms at the same location.

Elections for Board Members - Directors

Wayne Miller presented the slate for 2016-2018 Board election:

Director - Chris Lindeman

Director - Belle Avery

Director - Lawrence Dye

There were no nominations from the floor. Bob Horsch made a motion that the slate be elected by acclamation. I.B. Dent seconded the motion. VCTC vote carried the motion.

Treasurers Report—Gerry Henninger

- Year to date (May 25th) operating loss of \$2,189, membership dues of \$490, merchandise sales of \$1,200 and data from same period last year reflects operating loss of \$1,368, membership dues of \$720, merchandise sales of \$507 with percentage comparison of gross profit of approximately 30% and total expenses of -38%. Due to the small size of most transactions, fluctuations are expected to swing these various metrics; we are not in financial difficulty. Of course, we can always use more income!
- The latest financial statements were emailed to the VCTC Board and also available in hardcopy for attendees. The balance remains healthy (\$32,203.88 as of May 21, 2016).

Events—Wayne Miller, Chris Lindeman, Steve Lindeman

- The Damascus Trail Days event was successful. Many people stopped at the tent to ask questions, purchase merchandise, and become VCTC members. One membership is a Lifetime membership!
- The next event is Plumb Alley Day, May 28. A signup roster for volunteers was available for attendees.
- The Fairwood Valley History Tour is May 30th, 10:00am -12:00pm, beginning at the intersection of SR603 and Pine Mountain Road. Learn about the history, industry, railroad, transportation, and culture of "a town that doesn't exist". Tom Blevins and Steve Lindeman will lead the tour.
- The Hops & Howlers Brewfest is June 18, 5:30pm-9:30pm, at the Abingdon Farmers Market. Volunteers can sign up online (<http://www.hopsandhowlers.com>) and make sure to type in the Virginia Creeper Trail Club.

USFS—Beth Merz

- Beth is retiring, anticipated for July 1st, 2016.
- Beth was presented with a VCT Tote Bag as a token of appreciation and early retirement gift.
- The 50th Anniversary Event for the Mount Rogers National Recreational Area is May 31st, 1:00pm-3:30pm. There are many other events in the days before and after the 50th Anniversary Event. See the website for more details: <http://www.mountrogersfifty.org>
- A big thanks to Kevin Worley, TOA, for his support to the USFS and the 50th Anniversary celebration.
- A big thanks to the VCTC for its volunteers. The VCTC is a true partner!
- Beth had three handouts with information regarding events surrounding the 50th Anniversary celebration; the handouts were available for attendees and for their distribution as well.
- 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

Other—Various

- The man hole covers at MM 1 need repainting with yellow color to indicate a potential trip hazard.
- Since the previous VCTC meeting, volunteers in Damascus have picked up 37 bags of trash, which included 22 water bottles and 10 water bottle labels.

Program – Mr. Wayne Miller, singer, songwriter, and performer: "Review of 10 years of Virginia Creeper Trail songs"

Wayne played his acoustic guitar and led attendees in a delightful and enjoyable ten song sing-a-long. The lyrics were posted on the large screen through the overhead projector. His songs were heartwarming, humorous, and he had the audience singing on every song.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff VanCleaf, VCTC secretary