

Virginia Creeper Trail Club Meeting
August 31, 2016
Washington County Public Library

Present: Buddy Albro, Sean Albro, David Altizer, Jane Caldwell, Bo Catron, Jennifer Davis, Gerry Davis, Janice Donovan, David Donovan, Jenn Dunham, Myrl Dunham, Larry Durham, Lawrence Dye, Eleanor Grasselli, Gerry Henninger, Kitty Henninger, Bob Horsch, Carol Kerr, John Kerr, Anne Maio, Rhonda Marshall, Dean McCall, James McDermott, Bunny Medeiros, Wayne Miller, Tim Murr, Lisa Quigley, Jim Read, Paul Read, Laura Spence, Debbie Stern, Marsha Wikle

Guests: Ben Wassum, Peter Rea

VCTC President Wayne Miller called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm.

President's Report—Wayne Miller

- Wayne recognized and introduced the VCTC Officers and Board Members.
- Wayne, recipient of the Town of Abingdon's ("TOA") Arthur Campbell Service Award, displayed his recognition lapel pin and attributed his receipt of the Award to all of the hard work of the VCTC members.
- The VCTC website is nearing completion. Hardcopies of a representative home page and site map were provided to attendees. This new website will have numerous capabilities and enhancements over our current website.
- The VCTC has received a donation of 0.21 acres of land that will become part of the alternate VCT route at the intersection of SR 91 and SR 98. Upon VDOT's completion of the refurbishment of the bridge and VCT alternate route, the VCTC will donate this parcel of land to the Town of Damascus ("TOD") as agreed to with the TOD.
- Wayne, Lisa and Gerry met with the VCTC's insurance agency and our policy coverage is increased to cover special events and Workers' Compensation.
- The Yeti Trail Runner Club will have 100 runners to run 100 miles on the VCT on September 30th. Each runner will have 30 hours to complete their run beginning at White Top at 7:00AM.
- Wayne will lead a ride on October 3rd for a class from the College for Older Adults beginning at the Welcome Center and riding out to Alvarado Station.
- Due to schedule conflicts for the VCTC annual picnic, Wayne has presented Eliza Quigley with the President's Volunteer of the Year Award. A huge thanks to Eliza for all her efforts throughout the year!
- Projects completed to date: built and installed two benches, replaced a bench support leg, assisted the USFS with painting pole barriers and installing reflective tape for improved visibility, trimmed encroaching branches for the first six miles, and removed protruding stones.
- The VCTC project to replace the Green Cove Station porch, flooring, and cargo deck is progressing with cutting and drying of the special grade of 2" white oak lumber. A big thanks to Chris Sullivan for helping to obtain the lumber.
- Lawrence "The Legend" Dye has ridden his bicycle 191,140 miles on the VCT.
- Wayne will contact the TOA about placing gravel at the ends of the trestles to be spread by either the TOA or the VCTC.
- The next VCT Advisory Board meeting is September 14th.

Treasurers Report—Gerry Henninger

- Gerry and Kitty have moved into their new residence and it seems that historic Pony Express can even beat the speed of the internet service. Maintenance technicians are working the issue.
- There has not been an abundance of financial transactions lately. Once up and running, the new website should increase activities.
- The latest financial statements were emailed to the VCTC Board and also available in hardcopy for attendees. The balance remains healthy (\$33,249.75 as of August 23, 2016).

Events—Wayne Miller, Lisa Quigley

- The USFS will have an Outdoor Celebration on September 17. A VCTC volunteer will be needed to provide information and perhaps sell merchandise.
- The VCTC annual picnic begins at 4:00PM, October 2, at Alvarado Station. Bring a dish to share.
- The first annual Taylor Read Memorial Ride begins at 9:00AM, October 15th, at the Welcome Center. The ride concludes with lunch and live music at Alvarado Station. Folks can also forego the ride and just meet at Alvarado

Station. Volunteers are needed for an early morning shift at the Welcome Center and a late morning/afternoon shift at Alvarado Station.

USFS—Ben Wassum

- Two additional bike patrol personnel will begin September 1st. This doubles the current patrols.
- Replacement personnel at Green Cove and White Top will begin in September and finish in October.
- Ben will put the content from the VCTC's CD on the USFS website.

Other

- AmeriCorps will have a crew (about 10 college age students) available on October 1st to work projects on the VCT. Dean McCall will put together a list of projects and perhaps assist with leading the effort.
- "Leave No Trace" trainers will be in Southwest Virginia, October 10-17. They will have a presentation at the Damascus Library, October 12, 9:00AM-1:00PM, they will be present at the Rural Retreat Fair Grounds, October 14th, and a wrap up presentation at USFS Head Quarters at Mount Rogers, October 17. Issues with horse droppings will be discussed on October 14th.
- The Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club is recruiting for trail monitors that adopt a section of the Appalachian Trail to report a status and any issues. Information session is at the Damascus Library, September 18th. Hardcopy brochures were available for attendees.
- Abingdon Main Street has a request for volunteers to assist with Buskerfest, September 3rd.
- The VCTC can now earn free money through two Corporate programs: (i) Kroger Community Rewards Program and (ii) the AmazonSmile Foundation. The VCTC will receive cash when shoppers register their Kroger Plus card by entering "Virginia Creeper Trail Club" at krogercommunityrewards.com. The VCTC will receive 0.5% of the purchase price on eligible purchases at smile.amazon.com when shoppers link their purchases to the VCTC. There is no additional cost to the consumer or to the VCTC!
- The TOD has pressure washed Trestle #16 and it looks much better, however there are rotten boards that will soon need to be replaced.
- The narrow single track paths at MM 9 need attention. These are especially slippery when wet.
- Improvement of signage that limits confusion and directs trail traffic to remain on the trail is needed at Callahan's Crossing near Damascus. Some trail traffic is confused and takes the gravel road that leads to SR 58.
- The trail side toilets at Green Cove and Straight Branch need to be pumped out.
- There is vegetation encroaching the trail between the White Top commercial parking lot to the North Carolina state line. Perhaps this could be a project for AmeriCorps.

Program—Mr. Peter Rea, ZAP Fitness, training program incorporating the VCT

Zap Fitness, located in Blowing Rock, North Carolina, is a non-profit training center for post-collegiate Olympic hopeful long distance runners. The 30 bed guest lodge is host to anyone interested in improving any skill level of running, even folks that want to begin running. Although Zap Fitness's 68 acres provides an opportunity for running, all campers are brought to the VCT.

Mr. Rea provided a brief slide show overview of Zap Fitness. He discussed the history of Olympic and marathon running, the wide variety of reasons folks take advantage of the Zap Fitness retreat, and why the VCT is an important part of their training program.

Mr. Rea also mentioned the progress in the development of a new trail in North Carolina that began about 10 years ago. The Middle Fork Greenway trail has used the model of the VCT and the VCTC as an example and looks to establish a 10.4-mile trail. Three 1.5-mile segments are complete with a goal of entire trail completion by 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff VanCleaf, VCTC secretary