



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We hear much talk these days about a “Divided America” and “Collusion”. I would like us to talk about a “United America” and “Cooperation”.

Is there anything more American than when, thirty years ago, doctors French Moore Jr. and Dave Brillhart, with the cooperation and support of many volunteers, overcame political differences and dissension to convert an abandoned railroad bed into a renowned National Recreation Trail?

I think most people would agree that having the Virginia Creeper Trail is good thing. And many people are still volunteering their time, labor, and skills to help keep the Trail safe and enjoyable for those visitors who come here from around the world to experience it.

Our Virginia Creeper Trail Club works with the three Trail owners (Abingdon, Damascus and US Forest Service) by providing materials and doing maintenance projects, large and small: from painting Whitetop and Green Cove Stations, replacing Green Cove Station porch and cargo deck, washing and painting trailside toilets, installing interpretive signs and park benches, cleaning and waxing interpretive signs to picking up trash along the Trail.



Wayne Miller, VCTC President

Our Club volunteers also provide information about the Trail to potential users through scheduled events, monthly meetings, lectures, the Club website and Newsletter and other media.

You will see our volunteers along the Trail, swinging a hammer or paintbrush, or rendering aid to users after the occasional mishap.

I am proud and privileged to know and work with these terrific people. And now, I am going to, despite the risk of offense by omitting someone, list the names of our 2017 Board members and volunteers:

Lawrence Dye, Gerry Henninger, Roger Reynolds, Tonya Triplett, Dean McCall, Chris Sullivan, Jeff VanCleaf, Buddy Albro, Greg Meade, Christine Lindeman, Jane Caldwell, Anne Maio, Eleanor Grasselli, Janice Donovan, Dave Donovan, Ingrid Graham, Jennifer Davis, John Brenner, Patty Brenner, Margaret Gregg, Carol Hess, Gerry Davis, David Altizer, Rhonda Marshall, Pat Phillips, Christy Hurst, Jeff Hurst, Warren Bonham, Lee Massicotte, Larry Durham, Mike Tully, Charley Dolpp, Bob Horsch, Myrl Dunham, Jim Mowbray, Ellen Reynolds, Steve Lindeman, Eliza Quigley, Bunny Mederios, George Kelley, Ed Davis, Ed Morgan, Bill Lawson, Bob Mueller, and Lisa Quigley (who goes far beyond the call of duty to keep the Club functioning and growing).

I thank each of you for your contribution to the Club and Trail. Our community is indebted to you. Be safe and enjoy the Holidays. I'll see you on the Trail. *Wayne Miller, President*

CURRENT VCTC OFFICERS and DIRECTORS:

President: Wayne Miller, **Vice President:** Buddy Albro, **Secretary:** Jeff VanCleaf, **Treasurer:** Gerry Henninger,
Past President: Link Elmore **Directors:** Belle Avery, Lawrence Dye, Chris Lindeman, Tonya Triplett, Greg Meade, Chris Sullivan, Dean McCall, Roger Reynolds

Green Cove Station Repairs Completed by VCTC

The Creeper Trail Club recently partnered with the US Forest Service to make significant repairs to the porch and decking of the historic Green Cove Station, near mile marker 30.

Green Cove Station is the original depot that dates to the 19th century and now serves as a US Forest Service Visitor's Center.

The Club provided \$1,500 for materials to build the support structure for the porch and deck. Club members including Wayne Miller, President, and Chris Sullivan worked to secure a special grade of 2" white oak lumber, which was generously donated by Clinch River Forest Products in Tazewell. The lumber was delivered in late October and then stored with the USFS to allow for drying over the winter.

On April 25 of this year, work began on the project to replace the porch, flooring, and cargo deck at the Station. The extensive project, was completed by VCTC members: Dave Donovan, Wayne Miller, president, Warren Bonham, Lee Massicotte, Larry Durham, Mike Tully, Charley Dolpp, Bob Horsch, Dean McCall, Myrl Dunham and Jim Mowbray as well as USFS staff, Stephen Hmurciak and Evan Blevins.

The project was completed on May 23rd. Be sure to visit soon to see their beautiful work. Many, many thanks to our excellent volunteers for their efforts and support of this great work!



Completed Deck

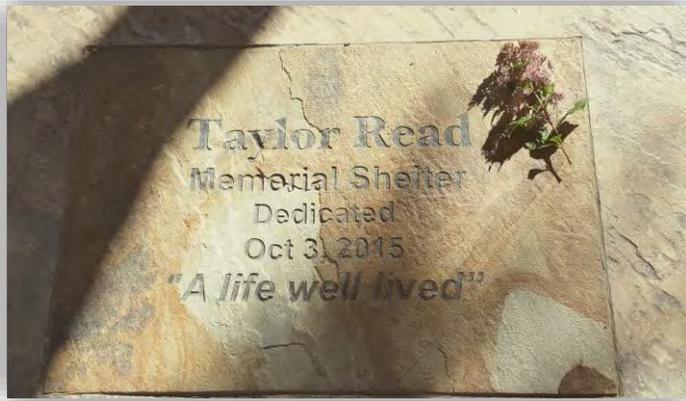


Construction Crew



Construction of Loading Platform

THIRD ANNUAL TAYLOR READ RIDE



In October 2015, the Taylor Read Memorial Shelter was dedicated at Alvarado Station. The shelter, a uniquely beautiful tribute to their son Taylor, was built with contributions from friends, family and the community that Paul and Kelly Read directed to the Creeper Trail Club.

This year will mark the 3rd annual **"Rails to River -- Ride for Taylor...Support the Creeper"** bike ride on Saturday, October 7. The day will begin at 9am at the Welcome Center at the trail head in Abingdon, where participants will pick up their commemorative tee shirts then ride to Alvarado. Lunch will be provided by the new River Café in

Alvarado along with music by Valley Grass. We will have registration available online on our website, vacreepertail.org the latter part of September and more information will follow by email soon.

We do need a large group of volunteers to continue to make this a successful event for all. Please let us know if you're interested!

As in past years, the Reads have generously directed donations from family and friends and ride participants to the VCTC and the event has become the Club's largest fund raiser. We remain grateful for their generosity.

Lisa Quigley



Taylor Read Memorial Shelter



Participants enjoy music and lunch

DAMASCUS FARMERS MARKET

Sally Johnson and Vicky Van de Vuurst, Virginia Creeper Trail Club members and co-managers of the farmers market in Damascus, asked the Club to participate, offering the club a space at the newly established farmers market in Damascus.

"Of course," was the response. "We will get a chance to promote the trail, sell some merchandise, and hopefully sign up new club members."

Volunteers work on Saturdays 9:00-1:00. Collectively, the club thought it was a great idea as well, and the sign up sheets were passed around for a turn at the market.

Steve and I took our turn on a beautiful Saturday morning. We stopped at Janice and Dave Donovan's house on the way to pick up tables and merchandise and headed to the car dealership on Laurel Avenue, soon be the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Center.



Volunteers, in the early stages: Janice Donovan, Bob Mueller

Our designated spot was surrounded by other vendors with their foods and wares. We got to sample local sausage by 5 Sisters, named after five adorable sisters who were happily playing around mom and dad. We sampled jellies, jams, and Greek food. We went home with some local soap, corn on the cob and post cards by Lewis Chapman and his wife, who were there with their drawings of the area and pet portraits. The club did sell some of the popular bike magnets and we did sign up some new Creeper Keeper members. Mostly we just socialized and enjoyed Damascus and the Saturday activities.

Our time flew by and we packed up and returned to Janice and Dave's. Thanks to them for letting the club store our materials there for the market season. Then we were off to hit the trail. We heard and read that Damascus is the friendliest town on the trail, and we sure did see that as volunteers at the market.

Chris Lindeman, events

THERE ARE STILL SLOTS AVAILABLE TO FILL AS THE MARKET RUNS THROUGH THE END OF OCTOBER. DAMASCUS IS A GREAT PLACE TO PROMOTE THE TRAIL WITH SO MANY VISITORS BEING SHUTTLED FROM TOWN TO WHITETOP. PLEASE HELP FOR A FEW HOURS.

EMAIL LISA AT LISAK.QUIGLEY@GMAIL.COM



FALL SAFETY TIPS and FACTS:

Use caution as the trail begins to be covered in fall leaves. When wet, leaves are slippery. Rocks and other debris are hidden underneath. Use special caution on trestles. Keeping your speed under control, especially when traveling downhill, will help prevent spills.

Though helmets are not required, they are highly recommended.

Keep a copy of your cell phone number in wallet, purse, or other personal items. If items are lost on the trail it helps us find the owner.

Please pack out all litter, including animal waste and cigarette butts.

Due to the rural location and mountainous terrain, cell service is not available along much of the trail. In the event of an accident or sudden illness, dial 9-1-1 with your location (nearest mile marker and/or trestle number). If cell service is not available, ask another trail user to go to the nearest house or station to call emergency services.

YETI SUPPORTS THE VIRGINIA CREEPER TRAIL



In early April, the Atlanta-based Yeti Trail Runners generously donated \$1,000 to the Creeper Trail Club in recognition of the Club's work maintaining and preserving the trail corridor.

In September 2016, the organization completed their first 100 Mile Endurance Race on the Creeper Trail. The race was so successful that they will return this year to do it again – from Whitetop Station to the trail head in Abingdon, back to Whitetop and then back down for the finish at the trail head – 102 miles to be exact!

The Creeper Trail Cottages in Damascus, owned by Sean and Buddy (VCTC Vice President) Albro, are the local sponsors. The race begins at 7am on September 29 and will continue throughout the day and night! We're grateful for their support and look forward to welcoming them back to the trail!

Jason Green, Yeti 100 Endurance Run Race Director, presents a check to Wayne Miller, VCTC president and his wife, Sharon.



VIRGINIA CREEPER FEST

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY VIRGINIA CREEPER TRAIL!!

In recognition of the Creeper Trail's 30th anniversary, the Town of Abingdon along with support from the VCTC, held the first "Virginia Creeper Fest" on Saturday, April 29th.

The event was headquartered at the trail head in Abingdon with booths and events lining A street. The family-friendly festival was designed to be a hands-on experience and included field games for kids and pets, guided nature walks and biking opportunities, food trucks, music, and a variety of outdoor recreation vendors.

Close to 1,000 visitors and local residents attended the daylong event with the VCTC providing a majority of the volunteer assistance. We look forward to future partnerships with the Town!



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

1. How many bridges and trestles are located on the trail?
2. How many entities own the trail?
3. How many miles has Lawrence the Legend currently completed, biking on the trail?
4. What year was the Green Cove Station built, and what purposes did it serve in addition to being a train depot?
5. What should you yell out before passing someone on the trail?

(answers on page 7)

Ride with Lawrence the Legend or Myrl Dunham!!



Photo's courtesy of Phillip Hoffer

The annual "Ride with the Legend" sponsored by the VCTC in conjunction with the VA Highlands Festival, was held on Saturday, July 29th. "The Legend", Lawrence Dye -- Club member, trail



ambassador and rider-extraordinaire (and did we mention, 85 years old!) has clocked over 192,400 miles on the Creeper Trail. Lawrence ordinarily would have led the ride to Whitetop Station but he was sidelined due to a recent injury and the ride was led by VCTC member Myrl Dunham under Lawrence's direction. Twenty riders left the trailhead at 9am and 6 hearty souls made it to Whitetop Station that afternoon! Congratulations to all the riders! And many, many thanks to Myrl for filling some rather large shoes that day!!

Lisa Quigley

PICNIC

Everyone's invited to...

The VCTC's annual picnic on Sunday, September 24! The picnic will be held at Alvarado Station and begins at 4:00. The Club will provide the entree (short rib Sloppy Joe's, catered by the new River Cafe) and drinks. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share and family and friends...we look forward to seeing you for a fun afternoon!



River Café, Alvarado Station



Mendota Trail now Open!

The first mile of the Mendota Trail is now open to the public. It starts at the trailhead in Mendota, VA and heads southeast to the North Fork of the Holston River. The trailhead is located at the intersection of Mendota Road and Civil Drive. A grand opening will be held from noon to 1 PM on October 7th to celebrate the realization of the dream for this trail. Efforts are currently underway for opening additional segments over the coming months. We thank the VCT Club for its support!

Bob Mueller



ANSWERS TO TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

1. There are 47 bridges and trestles located on the trail.
2. The trail is owned by three entities, National Forest Service, Town of Damascus, and Town of Abingdon.
3. Lawrence has completed 192,400 miles on the trail.
4. Green Cove Station was built in 1914, and served as a post office and general store, in addition to its function as a train depot.
5. You should yell "PASSING ON THE LEFT" a good distance before you pass another trail user.

AUTUMN REFLECTIONS

Spring is delightful. Autumn is enchanting. Autumn pushes aside the heat and humidity of summer. Crisp blue skies open vistas that appear to extend to forever as seen from places along the Creeper Trail between Abingdon and South Holston Lake.

Autumn brings a reduction in the volume of bird songs for the nesting season is over. No longer is it necessary for our feathered friends to musically declare their territorial rights and call up mates. The roar of Green Cove Creek and Whitetop Laurel Creek has reduced to murmurs in most places for spring floods and summer thunderstorm washouts have passed.

A crow pecks at an apple in the top of an apple tree near the trail. The apple is dislodged and falls through the apples hanging below, dislodging others, creating a chain reaction which sends several apples to the ground. Ernest Rutherford had nothing on the crows when he split the atom. The crows split the apple.

The sequence in which the various species of deciduous trees assume autumn colors in the woods and forests is worthy of our notice.

The lowly buckeye trees are among the first to hint of the autumn colors poised to appear over the following two and one-half months. Some species of the stubborn oaks may be the last to surrender their leaves. Oaks also can be spiteful, for most of them refuse to indulge in bright, eye-catching colors.

The red maples are pleasing. They reveal their brilliant colors before the majority of other tree species in the forests do. Blessed are the observers who discover rippled reflection pools in streams along the Creeper Trail with a red maple reflecting, backed up by a deep blue sky. Among artists, only one with a camera can accurately capture that colorful reflection.

Autumn unveils a small colony of October lady's tresses blooming by the trail. Add them to the list of orchids growing near the trail.

Autumn brings clear, cool days with children and even some adults playing revolutionary hopscotch on their bikes in order to splash through each puddle of sunlight on the trail. They seek relief from the chill invading their bodies. Somewhere along the trail a lone rider gives pause to the denizens of the forest with the sound of joy issuing from his lips. "Thank You for this wonderful day."



Autumn Reflections on Whitetop Laurel Creek



This is but a brief glimpse of autumn along the Creeper Trail, to be expanded by you, the reader. Visit and enjoy autumn along the trail.

George Kelley

October lady's tresses grow by the trail

SHARING THE HISTORY



L to R: Paul Lindsay, Ann Hassinger Smith, Karen Smith Linehan and Gary Greer. Gary's grandmother worked for the Hassingers in Konnarock.

Ann Hassinger Smith recently presented framed panoramic photographs from 1925 to Green Cove Station, Konnarock Store and Gary Greer, owner of Creeper Trail Bike Rental & Shuttle in Damascus.

In the early 1900's, Ann's grandfather, Luther, along with his two brothers, brought their large-band sawmill and timber management team to Damascus from Pennsylvania. The Hassingers built their own company town, calling it *Konnarock*, not long after their arrival. To move the timber out of the forests above Damascus, they extended the nascent Virginia-Carolina Railroad to Whitetop. This extension then completed the rail from Abingdon to the mountain top – and almost 70 years later – became the Virginia Creeper Trail.

Ann's father, Martin, took over the logging operation and sawmill in the mid-20's and later expanded the Hassinger Organization to include wholesale building supplies with locations in Bristol, Chattanooga and Greensboro. He served on the Bristol VA City Council as mayor and council member for many years and was well-known throughout southwest Virginia and northeast Tennessee for his philanthropic work.

The photographs were given in memory of Martin Hassinger by his daughters, Ann, and the late Caroline Hassinger Lindsay. Ann's daughter, Karen Smith Linehan, and Caroline's husband, Paul Lindsay, were also on hand for the presentations.



Lisa Quigley

VCTC MEMBERSHIP FORM



Mail Membership forms to:
The Virginia Creeper Trail Club
P.O. Box 2382
Abingdon, VA 24212

Membership:
 New
 Renewal

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip (5 + 4 digits) _____
Phone # _____ Today's Date _____
Email address _____
Committee interests: Membership Merchandise Events Trail Maintenance
 Publicity Welcome Center _____ Other _____
Individual \$10 _____ Family (household) \$20 _____ Business \$50 _____
Lifetime membership \$100 _____ Donation \$ _____ (any amount is appreciated)

The Virginia Creeper Trail Club
PO Box 2382
Abingdon, VA 24212-2382



TO: