



CRVI General Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 6, 2017
4:00 pm– 5:30 pm
St. Paul Recreation Room, St. Paul, VA

Introduction

The Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) held its fourth quarterly meeting of 2017 at the St. Paul Recreation Room in St. Paul, Virginia on Wednesday, December 6th, 2017. The General CRVI Committee meeting was held from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., following the CRVI Steering Committee meeting. Included below is a summary of the meeting highlights, action steps, and a list of meeting participants is available at the end. Special thanks to St. Paul for hosting the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

Facilitators from the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN) welcomed participants to the meeting. A brief overview was provided on CRVI's mission and meeting agenda topics. Topics scheduled for discussion included Action Group updates, Access Point planning, and the proposed Visitor's Center in St. Paul. Introductions were then made by those in attendance.

Action Group Updates

After the meeting introduction, updates were shared by each of the Action Groups chairs.

Downtown Revitalization

Daniel Pinard addressed the status of the Downtown Revitalization Action Group. Tazewell, Lebanon and Honaker are currently working on their Hometowns of the Clinch designations. The Action Group is looking into receiving assessments from the towns regarding infrastructure improvements in order to move towards requesting funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and

the Department for Environmental Quality (DEQ). The Tastes of the Clinch publications have been finished with the help of Heart of Appalachia.

Water Quality

Carol Doss addressed the status of the Water Quality Action Group. The Action Group is currently applying for an AmeriCorps VISTA position for a one year term. Two grants from the Department of Forestry (DOF) have been received. One grant will provide citizen stream monitor training. Volunteers can be high school ages and up. The DOF is also providing funding for the March 2018 Youth Summit. More grants are being applied for currently.

Access Points

Steve Lindemen addressed the status of the Access Points Action Group. More detail on updates will be provided during an access point discussion later in the meeting. Funding from the Tennessee Valley Authority has been provided to create more access points, acquire land, and improve upon current sites. A meeting was held with Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) regarding potential access points to be created on VDOT owned properties. The following discussion will address these potential locations in greater detail.

Environmental Education

Wally Smith addressed the status of the Environmental Education Action Group. The Action Group is preparing for its upcoming Youth Summit. The Annual Environmental Symposium is also in preparation. The date is tentatively set for the 2nd Saturday in May. More information will become available after the 1st of the year. The hope is to have the Symposium at the Oxbow Center, which is currently in development. It was donated last year by UVA-Wise. The Action Group is also developing content for access point kiosks at access points.

State Park

Steve Lindeman addressed the status of the State Park Action Group. Funding has been received from the General Assembly for the state park. Access points are part of the State Park development effort and will eventually be transferred to the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Tazewell County Cavitt's Creek Park has been completed. A portion in Russell County is expected to be completed in the spring. Two properties are currently in the negotiation phase.

General Updates and Presentations

Presentation: St. Paul Visitor's Center with Kitty Barker

Kitty Barker from the Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority provided a presentation on the proposed Visitor's Center in St. Paul. VDOT has donated property on Rt. 58 adjacent to St. Paul for its use. Heart of Appalachia will be staffing the Center, which will also serve as a State Park Visitor Center.

The Center hope so to provide local ecological information and education. This would include tours and restoration projects. A pedestrian bridge is proposed to connect to the Oxbow Center, and more parking will be needed as well in the future. The VA Tech Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) helped to create a Master Plan previously. Next steps is to have an architectural design draft with VDOT access guidelines, and to include rain gardens and additional features in the design. However, additional funding is needed to move the project forward. Potential sources of funding include the Stormwater Assistance fund through the DEQ and others.

Presentation and Discussion: Clinch River Access Point Planning with Steve Lindeman

Steve Lindeman, co-chair of the Access Points Access Group, gave a presentation on the highlights of access point development on the Clinch -- including the recently completed access points of Critterville, Old Castlewood, and Artrip. Critterville currently has high kayak usage during high water. Old Castlewood is in the process of becoming ready for transfer to DCR in the future. Artrip has been completed with an informational kiosk. Steering Committee members suggested the possibility of including an oral history from Muskrat who is a local resident that lives nearby as part of sharing oral histories in the Clinch Valley as well.

The purpose of the discussion presentation following the presentation was to receive community feedback on possible access points along the Clinch in small groups with maps. Before the small groups broke out, a question was raised regarding who is in charge of access point maintenance. The response was that the maintenance varies by site -- Richlands currently maintains their own access points, and VDGIF sites are maintained by their own personnel. Some sites have a lease agreement with the Nature Conservancy, and Russell County will manage their sites until transferred to the State Park.

Maps were provided for five sections of the Clinch moving from NE to SW: Tazewell, Pucketts Hole, Carterton, Miller's Yard, and Scott County. The maps showed existing access points, potential sites through VDOT, or new potential access point locations. Meeting participants were asked for feedback about the proposed access points, new potential access point locations, and note any known issues or opportunities. The groups then shared the highlights of each of their small groups once the group reconvened.

Small group report out of highlights are below and correspond to annotated maps, which the Access Points Action Group has available for reference.

Tazewell

Daw Road was identified as a prime location due to its road access and campground proximity. McDonald's has decking in place for the Access Point. Swinging Bridge is located near the Appalachian Detention Center near Blackford. Limestone Road has a bridge owned by VDOT. Suggestions were made link to Google Maps to provide better scale and see river access.

Pucketts Hole

It was noted that the Nature Conservancy owns property in Carbo which could potentially create issues and opportunities. A larger vision for the Nash Ford DGIF site was suggested. A trail could be connected through the properties from Big Cedar Creek down to the Clinch. The Pinnacle site has been clearly identified as a no camping zone by the river.

Carterton

The site below the falls was relocated to give boaters the option to avoid the rapids. There is property located at the gorge that has a private owner who is potentially willing to sell their property.

Miller's Yard

An existing VDGIF access point was missing from the map and added. The road access ends at Miller's Yard, but there is highway access to the river on the south side. The former Swinging Bridge location is available through public access roads, but they may be steep and winding. Since Miller's Yard is privately owned, Swinging Bridge may be a better alternative. The Dungannon and Route 659 access points may not be developed due to their close proximity to a current access point. The railroad may not be an issue to the Grays Ford or Mill Creek locations if on the right side of the river. Two additional potential sites were identified and noted.

Scott County

The Hill Station and Craft Mill Bridge areas have potential as sites as the property is already owned by Scott County. Parking was identified as an issue at the Swinging Bridge and Slant access points, and that Slant should be added as an access point on the river. There were also questions raised about the common features that access points should have (for example, picnic shelters) and which sites need to have enhancements. This conversation could be continued with Pam Cox to create an action list for access point improvements in Scott County. It was suggested that Craft Mill needs to be armored. Fort Blackmore is also in need of improved parking and turnaround areas, especially since it is seeing high use. More info was requested regarding Wretch and Lavender Farms, and the need for additional access points before the Tennessee state line were noted as well. In addition, there is an opportunity to look at opportunities at the swinging bridge before Rt. 58/ Speer's Ferry.

CRVI's Next Steps

The next meeting is proposed to be scheduled in February in Cleveland. Stay tuned to the website for additional details at www.clinchriverva.com.

Meeting Participants

1. Frank Dukes
2. Christine Gyovai
3. Wally Smith
4. Katie Dunn
5. Doug Jackson
6. Bill Miller
7. Travis Stanley
8. Mrs. Stanley
9. Carol Doss
10. John Harley
11. Steve Lindeman
12. Catrina Mullins
13. Beth Bingham
14. Daniel Pinard
15. Kitty Barker
16. Ricky Barton
17. Maddie Gordon
18. Billy Gillespie
19. Monty Salyer
20. Greg Estoll
21. Bill Miller
22. David Berry
23. Pam Cox
24. Rich Kirby