

# Mendota Trail Newsletter

## Opening Celebration in Mendota!

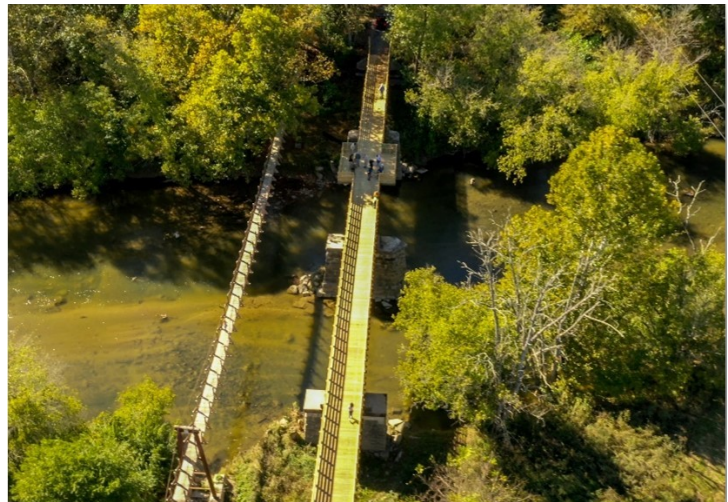
Sunday, October 17, 2021, was another great day for the Mendota Trail! On this picture perfect day, we celebrated another mile of open trail and three newly restored trestles on the Mendota end of the trail. In total, the Mendota Trail now has 8.2 miles of open trail and six restored trestles.

Oscar Harris and Heather Pace provided opening music with Carter Family favorites including “Keep on the Sunny Side” and “Wildwood Flower.” This was followed by acknowledgement of the donors responsible for the addition of the newest members of the Mendota Trail trestle family – Sunny Side, Wildwood and Abrams Creek Crossing.

Finally, our elected officials joined in with a united show of support for not only the current achievements but the future goal of seeing the Mendota Trail fully opened between Bristol and Mendota with 12.5 completed miles.

We wrapped up the day’s events with a ribbon cutting for each trestle and music provided by the ETSU Old Time Band.

We wish to thank everyone involved in the day’s event but especially the 100+ supporters who attended and walked on the Mendota Trail – many for the first time. We were honored that they chose to share their Sunday afternoon with us.





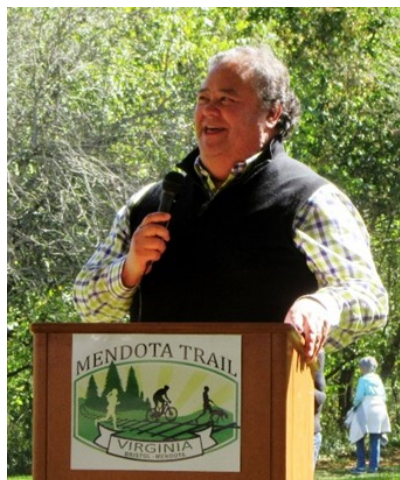
## Mendota Trail Opening Celebration



Oscar Harris & Heather Pace



ETSU Old Time Band



Supervisor Saul Hernandez



Delegate Will Wampler



Delegate Terry Kilgore



Senator Todd Pillion



Cody Mumpower, with  
U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith's office

## Construction Advisory



Phase I construction work began at the Bristol Trailhead along Island Road in mid-November. Our contractor is King General Contractors, Inc. of Bristol, VA. **Parking at that location will be unavailable until spring. For now, the trail remains fully open, starting at the underpass.**

Phase I will include excavation and grading, building an ADA compliant access ramp to the trail, creating a parking area and detention pond for storm water management, erecting a retaining wall, and installing steps to the access ramp from the parking area. In mid-spring, grading and paving of the first 0.4 mile will be done so it will be more accessible for our users with mobility challenges.

**Please avoid parking on VDOT property extending from the underpass out to Island Road.** Your vehicle may not be there when you return! This is a VDOT designated tow-away zone.

**Plenty of parking remains available in Benhams and Mendota throughout the construction.** We encourage you to use these alternate parking areas and enjoy these other trail sections.

Mountain Sports Ltd. has offered parking at their store, 1021 Commonwealth Ave., for cyclists during our Phase I construction. The store is about one mile from the I-81 underpass. We thank MSL for their help during our 'growing pains.'

Please consider donating to the Conservancy in support of this project, as the federal grant award won't cover the total expense. All contributions for the project will be matched dollar for dollar. Designate "Trailhead" on the memo line of your check. We thank you!





## Maximizing your Contributions

Your tax advantaged donations go a long way with the Mendota Trail Conservancy!

We accomplish this in multiple ways:

- + maximizing the talents of our Board and dedicated volunteer team members for fundraising, marketing, and social media outreach.
- + using salvaged materials (old timbers, telephone poles, bags of soil, etc.), to defray the costs of using new materials.
- + eliminating overhead expenses for staffing by being an all-volunteer organization. We contract for services such as accounting, website, etc., as needed.
- + exploring creative construction design adaptations to minimize material expenses or to develop efficiencies in construction so our contracted labor is used optimally.
- + surveying multiple vendors to find best pricing for materials while also ensuring we obtain the best quality possible.
- + relying heavily on volunteer labor to complete our construction and trail maintenance tasks. It is a labor of love for us!

We truly endeavor to “Do more with less.”



Please consider the Mendota Trail Conservancy, Inc. in your charitable gifts for 2021.

PO Box 1322

Bristol, VA 24203

**We thank you!**



## 'Cut to the Chase' a Big Success!

On October 23rd, the Mendota Trail hosted its first 5K & 1 Mile run/walk in Benhams, supported by **WeRunEvents**. There were over 100 participants, many of them seeing the trail for the first time. The course featured two of our trestles and the Cut. We were blessed with beautiful weather. The reviews of the trail and the 5K course were all positive.

Organizers for the event were **Ellen Mueller** and **Jerry Grantham** with assistance from **Randi Goodman**. Volunteers who assisted and helped it run smoothly were **Phil Young, Ken Fleenor, Bob Mueller, Ben & Anne Cowan, Eva Beale, Darin & Amy Denton, Brian Penley** and **Fred Greear**. Photographers were **Cheryl LeBlanc** and **Rick Hamm**.

Thanks to everyone for making this a fun and successful event on the trail.



1 Mile  
walk



5K run



All photos provided by  
Rick Hamm. We thank you!



## 5K & 1 Mile Run/Walk Sponsors

### Gold Level:

CARY STREET  
PARTNERS

**BERRY**  
HOME CENTERS, INC.

### Silver Level:

*Watauga*  
ORTHOPAEDICS

**HMG**  
HOLSTON MEDICAL GROUP



Mountain Sports, Ltd.

### Bronze Level:

**FOR**   
**pets sake**  
**ANIMAL RESCUE**

**First Bank**  
& Trust Company  
Member FDIC

 *Brown Dental*



**FOOD COUNTRY USA**  
The Food Specialist  
QUALITY, PRICE, SATISFACTION

  
**Burke, Powers & Harty**  
Experience, Insuring Your Future.



## Gifts in Support of Abrams Creek Crossing, Trestle 17

In October, **Washington County, VA** made a major gift to the Conservancy to co-sponsor the restoration of Abrams Creek Crossing. Washington County has partnered with the trail in multiple ways over the last several years, especially related to our appropriations from Virginia DCR. We have great appreciation for the County staff employees who have been so helpful in guiding us through the intricacies of regulations and guidelines!

The project was co-sponsored by Bob and Ellen Mueller in recognition of **Mountain Heritage, Inc., Frank Kilgore and Jean Kilgore** for their roles in advancing the trail effort dating back to 2016. The trail would not be where it is today without their committed guidance.

Plaques recognizing these gifts will be placed adjacent to the trestle.



## Support the Trail While Shopping at Amazon!



1. Go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) & register to be a customer.
2. Go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) & sign in with your amazon email & password.
3. In the space for the name of the charitable organization, type Mendota Trail Conservancy. You only need to do this once. The site will remember the trail as your charity.
4. Start Shopping.

Amazon will make a quarterly donation to the trail. A win – win for everyone!



Please give thought to joining other donors who have recently made special gifts to our trail effort in memory of those no longer with us:

In memory of **Rex William Eades**

We will notify a designated loved one of your remembrance if you choose to supply us with their contact information.

## Trail Merchandise for Sale

Do you know a Santa who is looking for ideas for all the special people on his "Nice" list?



Stop by Mountain Sports, Ltd. in Bristol and check out our long sleeve T-shirts, available in ash gray and light blue. There is also a limited supply of 2022 Mendota Trail pictorial calendars.





## Treating our Neighbors



On Friday, October 29 two of our intrepid trail volunteers visited Benhams Child Development Center to share some Halloween joy. **Eva Beaulé** (aka the Cat in the Hat) and **Ellen Mueller** (aka the Princess) enjoyed their time spent with the children. They received an amazing reception!



The original plan called for more “characters” dispensing goodies to the kids on the trail, but the forecast of rain required a change of plans.



### Check out two videos!



**Jack Dunham** has created another amazing video for the Mendota Trail. The most recent version is the result of multiple trips to the trail, visiting various shooting locations over many months and different seasons. He used a GoPro camera, a video camera and a drone for gathering the footage. Then he spent hours on his computer inserting graphics and doing all the editing for the creation of the magical montage.

A final step involved dubbing in the background audio and adding the voiceover narration. Jack is truly an artist. We feel fortunate he is sharing his talents with us and are extremely grateful for his support of the trail.

Here is a link to the video on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HK1iGEpIVK8>

Our friends at Virginia Outdoors Foundation produced a video earlier this year commemorating the opening of Trestle 4, Benhams Crossing, in July.

Here is a link to the video on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS-WrlQ7urA>

# King University Service Day



25 energetic students from King University helped enhance our trail on August 21<sup>st</sup>.



They cleared brush, trimmed trees and shrubs and posted safety signage on our fencing along Campground Road.



We thank these student volunteers and King University for their engagement in our community!



## Meet the Cowans!

Ben and Anne Cowan have been long term supporters of the Bristol community in multiple ways. They love their region and its people and have adopted many projects that enrich everyone, freely giving their time and talents. Beneficiaries have included Boy Scout Troop 3, the Paramount Theater, the Steele Creek Nature Center, United Way, Girl's Inc., and the Mendota Trail, among many others.

Anne and Ben are long time outdoor enthusiasts. They are avid cyclists and hikers and have enjoyed multiple bicycle touring adventures around the world. They have done several cross-country bike rides in support of local charitable needs, primarily hospice related initiatives.

Ben is a proud father, grandfather, veteran, and retired internist (oncologist, hematologist and hospice/palliative care specialist) formerly affiliated with Bristol Regional Medical Center. Anne is a lifelong community volunteer, mother, grandmother and an avid quilter, and former physical therapist who is currently a long-term volunteer at BRMC.

Both are actively engaged in their community and sincerely believe that everyone can make a difference. "Retirement" is not part of their vocabulary. Ben belongs to Noon Rotary and RO-MEO (Retired Old Men Eating Out). He also enjoys crafting beers in his garage and helping his bees make honey for all of us to enjoy. Anne organizes fellow quilters in making many donation quilts for various organizations in the Tri-Cities and herself has made over 100 quilts to donate.

They have three sons and five grandchildren, located in Knoxville and Colorado. They, of course, enjoy big time reunions with their family!

The Cowans decided to fully sponsor the restoration of Trestle 18 in 2020. It is a beautiful, curved trestle with supporting stonework at the abutments created by craftsmen many years ago. Anne and Ben took pride in fostering the completion of the trestle as they were on site to help with several components of its restoration, including infrastructure work and securing the decking. They lovingly named the trestle Wildwood, in recognition of one of the signature songs of the Carter Family who had ties to Bristol and this area of Washington County.



Anne & Ben Cowan



Wildwood, Trestle 18



One of our Board members, **Bill Tindall**, recently created a twelve-page manual entitled “How to Build a Bridge.” The document is a distillation of a collaborative effort with fellow Board member, **Brian Penley**, and members of the Inland Construction crew, **David** and **Stanley**. They collectively brainstormed how to economize on material and labor costs. The principles were used and tested in multiple applications in the construction of our most recent trestle restorations on the Mendota end of the trail.

The manual has been shared on a state level with the State Trails Advisory Committee (DCR) and with the national organization, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

Thank you, Bill, Brian, David, and Stanley, for benefiting our restoration projects and for advancing other recreational trails nationwide!



Construction crew: Bryan, Stanley, Jason, Jeremy, David, Bill Tindall. Not in picture...Brian Penley.



## Mountain Dew Outdoor Grant Award

The Mendota Trail Conservancy received a \$5,000 grant award from the Mountain Dew Outdoors campaign on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Awards are made to organizations that “support the outdoors through conservation, participation and outdoor access/infrastructure initiatives.” The Mountain Dew Outdoor Grants Program began in 2020.



(L to R) Virginia Delegate Israel O’Quinn, Eva Beale from Mendota Trail Conservancy, and PepsiCo executives Jason Smith, Rex Henley and Gabriel Danastor

The check was presented by Jason Smith of PepsiCo (producer of Mountain Dew) to Eva Beale, representing MTC. Comments were made by Mr. Smith, Delegate Israel O’Quinn, and Eva Beale at the presentation ceremony. A “Mountain Dew Toast” followed the presentation!

We are extremely grateful to PepsiCo and Food City, who nominated us for this award. Thank you!



## Trail Rules

- Open dawn to dusk
- No trespassing on adjacent private property
- No motorized vehicles
- No littering, tobacco products, alcohol, or drugs
- No hunting or discharging of firearms
- No animals other than leashed non-vicious dogs. Dog owners liable for injuries. Dog waste must be disposed of properly
- Minors must be accompanied by adults

**TRAIL USERS DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK AND BY USING THE TRAIL WAIVE ALL CLAIMS OF INJURY OR PROPERTY DAMAGE AGAINST TRAIL OWNER, ITS AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS, EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, BOARD MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES.**

**REMAIN ONLY ON THE EIGHT MILES OF TRAIL THAT ARE CURRENTLY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. DO NOT TRESPASS ON UNOPENED SECTIONS OR POSTED SEGMENTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.**

# Did you know?

Number of 3" deck screws in Sunny Side (Bridge 19 over the river)

- 13,000

Number of 2 x 6 deck boards on Sunny Side

- 619

Do you have other items of interest or questions? Submit them to:

[info@mendotatrail.org](mailto:info@mendotatrail.org).





## Recent News Articles About Our Trail

**Scott County Virginia Star...**10/16/21:

<https://www.virginiastar.net/articles/ribbon-cutting-to-celebrate-opening-three-trestles-on-mendota-trail/>

**Bristol Herald Courier...**10/15/21:

[https://heraldcourier.com/news/local/landmark-sunnyside-trestle-opens-adding-another-mile-to-mendota-trail/article\\_b190e04f-4fbe-5285-bfa8-80a226f681ff.html](https://heraldcourier.com/news/local/landmark-sunnyside-trestle-opens-adding-another-mile-to-mendota-trail/article_b190e04f-4fbe-5285-bfa8-80a226f681ff.html)

**Johnson City Press...**10/25/21: [https://](https://www.johnsoncitypress.com/living/mendota-trail-opens-three-new-bridges/article_a38d0f6a-3019-11ec-8c8a-6ff283d3ea1e.html)

[www.johnsoncitypress.com/living/mendota-trail-opens-three-new-bridges/article\\_a38d0f6a-3019-11ec-8c8a-6ff283d3ea1e.html](https://www.johnsoncitypress.com/living/mendota-trail-opens-three-new-bridges/article_a38d0f6a-3019-11ec-8c8a-6ff283d3ea1e.html)



## STAY CONNECTED!

Please visit our website! Our brochure, video and prior newsletters are available for viewing.

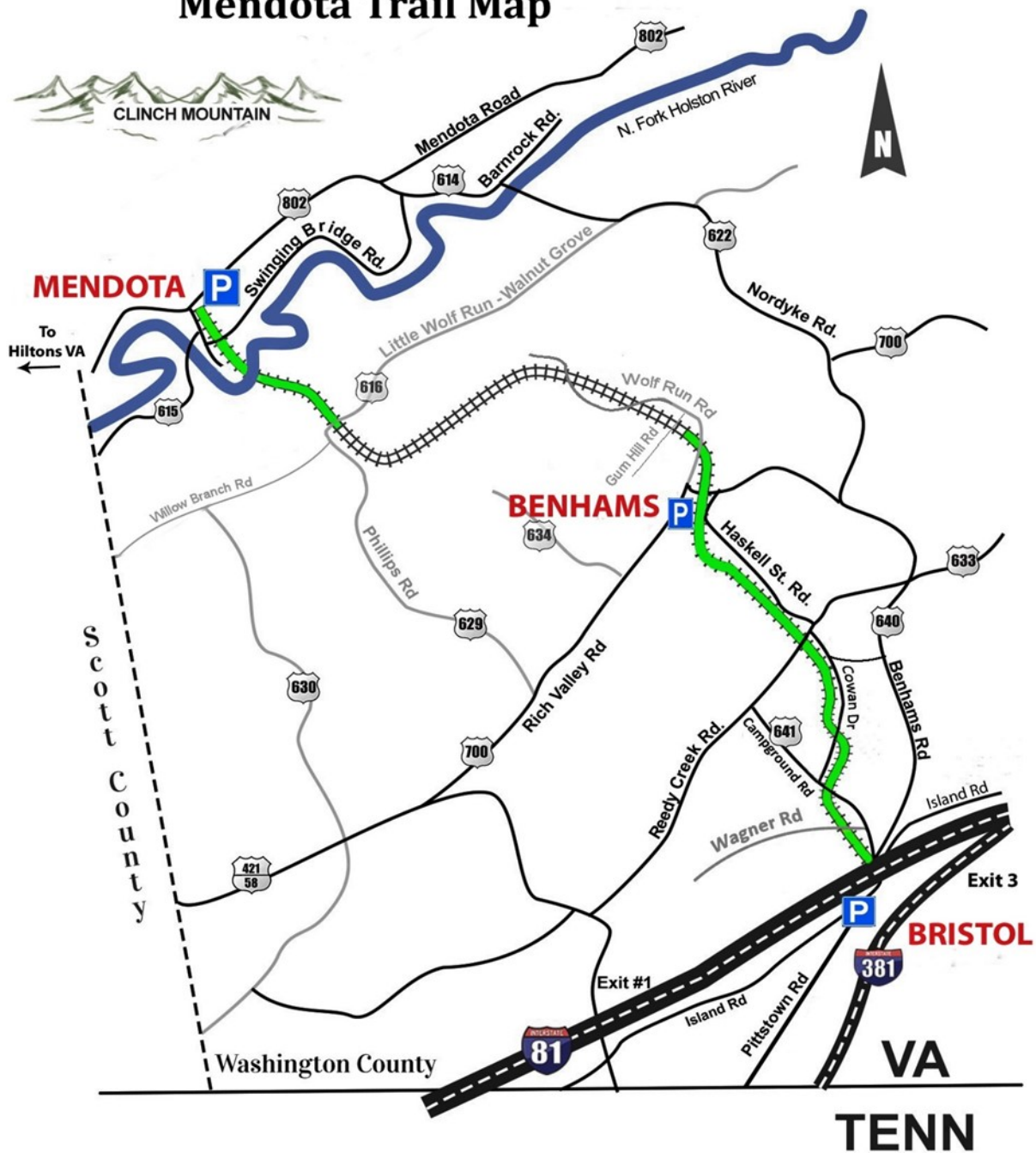
[www.mendotatrail.org](http://www.mendotatrail.org)



[www.facebook.com/mendotatrailblazer](https://www.facebook.com/mendotatrailblazer)



# Mendota Trail Map



Open sections designated in green

Benhams Parking: 7720 Rich Valley Rd.

Mendota Parking: 2421 Mendota Rd.

Bristol Trailhead not available for parking until spring  
2022