



Mendota Trail Newsletter

Bristol Trailhead Update

Our construction team, **King General Contractors**, has made significant progress on enhancements at the Bristol Trailhead. They have completed extensive excavation and grading to create a lengthy ADA compliant access ramp to the starting point of the trail as well as parking areas and a footprint for our future restroom facility and pavilion. They



also built a detention pond and an underground drainage system for storm water mitigation. Concrete walkways and steps were also installed.

Bare soil has been seeded and now they are focused on grading the first 0.5 mile segment of the trail leading up to Trestle 1, which will also be ADA compliant. The next phase will include placement of gravel on the ramp and first section of the trail in preparation for asphalt paving.

This project is largely funded by a federal grant administered by the Recreational Trails Program with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.



The project has a completion date of late spring.

We will then move forward with constructing a pavilion on the site and adding landscaping improvements.

These two construction areas remain closed for now. We apologize for the temporary inconvenience.

Construction Update in the Gorge

The team with **Inland Construction, Inc.** is busily moving forward with our trestle restorations in the northern portion of the gorge. It is anticipated we will unveil the full fruits of their efforts sometime this summer. In all, five or six trestles will be restored, allowing us to open **THREE MORE MILES** of trail!!!

Some will recall we asked for donations in late 2020 to 'SAVE the TRESTLES.' Many of you stepped up, allowing us to perform emergency repairs on Trestle 13 and Trestle 14 which were at significant risk of being washed away. The preservation work in early 2021 resuscitated these two beauties so they were able to withstand one more year of heavy rains and, thereby, be with us for their full restoration with the current project. The 'before' and 'after' photos of the gorge trestles will be particularly striking.

This remote section of the trail is especially scenic, as it repeatedly crosses or borders a beautiful creek that is shouldered by steep wooded hillsides.

The project is being funded by a Virginia DCR appropriation submitted by our amazing delegation in Southwest Virginia:

Senator Todd Pillion Delegate Terry Kilgore

Delegate Israel O'Quinn Delegate Will Wampler

Caution: This area of the trail is an active construction zone. It is gated and closed to the public. Please be patient and enjoy this section when it is opened later this year.



Trestles 13 & 14 from summer 2019. Stay tuned for the "after" photos in the next newsletter!



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 **Carolina Hammond**, by Elinor & Ed LeClaire and by the group known as "A Herd of Wild Runners." She is remembered as a lover of the outdoors.

In memory of **John Iskra**, by multiple friends, students, and professional colleagues. One attached the following note: 'Thank you for the solace of the natural world.'

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

Website Upgrades

Our website has received significant upgrades, thanks to expertise from the talented people at **The Summit**. The technical support they provide includes a secure and more dynamic website as well as important maintenance and backup. Special thanks to **Eva Beale** and **Ellen Mueller** for assisting with this project. Visit our new site online at www.MendotaTrail.org to view the changes.



STAY CONNECTED!

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



www.facebook.com/mendotatrailblazer



Instagram @mendota_trail



Twitter @MendotaTrail

#mendotatrail

Support the Trail While Shopping at Amazon!



1. Go to www.amazon.com & register to be a customer.
2. Go to 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!

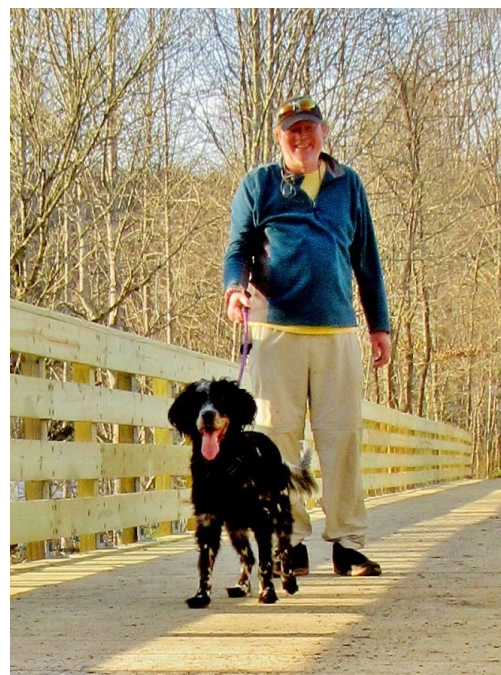
In Memorium.....Dr. John Iskra

by Bob Mueller

supporter of the trail and frequented it regularly, sometimes twice a day, as a runner and dog walker. A photo of John crossing Trestle # 3 in Benhams is included in our current brochure.

John participated in several of our volunteer workdays. He always had a ready smile and was a steadfast advocate for the full development of the trail.

Sadly, a man's full footprint on his community and this earth is often not fully appreciated while he still walks among us. John, being the humble sort, did not crow about his accomplishments or how he had made his all too short time with us a better place for all. This was brought home most poignantly when Ellen and I attended his memorial service in late February. His father, Deacon Joseph Iskra, led the service. Family members, work colleagues and others fleshed out the enormity of the man and helped me better appreciate how privileged I was to have shared time with him. The service was touching and powerful.



Professionally, John's career led him to 17 years in the math department at Emory & Henry College. He earned a B.S. (mathematics major/philosophy minor) from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Tennessee.

Aside from his career, John was actively engaged in the political realm on several levels and was a serious runner, participating in over ten marathons. His P.R. was 2 hours, 26 minutes. He served as coach for several years locally on both the secondary and collegiate levels.

John's family graciously suggested that memorials in his name be directed to the further advancement of the Mendota Trail. There has been an amazing response from the many people he touched.

A memorial bench recognizing John will be placed at 0.75 miles on the trail out of Bristol this summer. His feet traversed this area many times over the last several years. The solitude of the location is a fitting one as it offers the opportunity for quiet reflection, overlooking a tranquil view of a calming creek below a wooded hillside.

For a full obituary on John Iskra, please go to: www.blevinscares.com



Save the Date

Celebrate Trails Day.....4/23

Creeper Trail Yeti run....6/4

Cut to the Chase 5K & 1 mile run/walk

Mendota Trail in Benhams....10/22



Port-a-johns are opened!

The port-a-johns are open again in Mendota and Benhams. We will add another one later this season after construction is completed at the Bristol Trailhead. Believe it or not, the rental and service fees for these units exceed \$4,300 per year. **Please support our full plate of operating costs by making a contribution today to the Mendota Trail!**



Merchandise for Sale



Support the trail by purchasing a long sleeve shirt or trail decal. These are available at Mountain Sports Ltd and at The Store @ Mendota. Shirts are light blue or ash gray.

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 discharge 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.



SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SCENIC RAILROAD NO. 4
MENDOTA, VA
OCTOBER 18, 1975

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID W. DEVAULT
(IMAGE COLLECTION OF RON FLANARY)

Excursion train leaving Mendota, 1975

The Store@Mendota

Our friends at The Store are back for another season! Please stop by so they can welcome your visit..... whether for the first time or as a returning friendly face. You will not be disappointed!

They offer a great selection of hearty sandwiches and scrumptious sweet treats. After all, you need to recharge after expending all that energy on the trail. By the way, the friendly atmosphere is calorie free!

You have a choice of indoor dining or an inviting outdoor patio. Stop, sit a spell, and enjoy!

Hours: Wednesday – Sunday: 11 am – 5 pm



KROGER REWARDS



Shopping at Kroger with a Rewards Plus Card can now earn money for the Mendota Trail!!

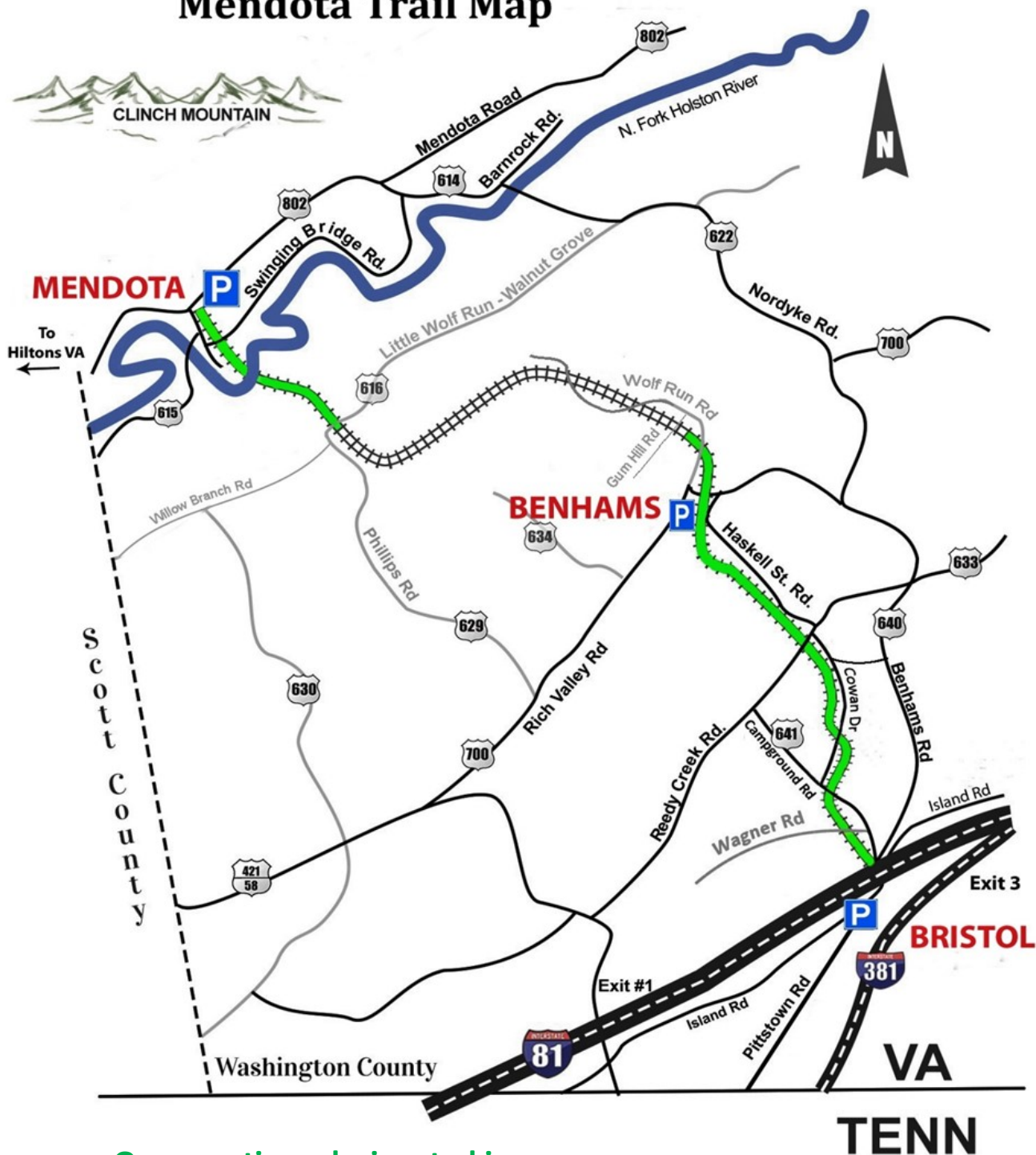
Link your Kroger rewards card to the trail and Kroger will make a donation to us every three months.

1. Go to [Kroger.com](https://www.kroger.com) and sign in.
2. From the menu at the top, click on Save, then Kroger Community Rewards.
3. Scroll down and click I'm a customer.
4. Type Mendota Trail in the organization search box then click Save.

The more people that register, the more money we receive!



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 late spring 2022