

Mendota Trail Newsletter

PROGRESS UPDATE

Since the last (February) newsletter.....

- Significant work has been completed along Campground Rd. and Cowan Dr. to bypass areas where a former trestle was removed and the road was rerouted
- Water drainage issues have been addressed at several points along Cowan Dr. and Haskell Station Rd.
- A temporary access ramp was created from the trailhead property in Bristol to the area under I-81
- We have had further collaboration with VDOT resulting in their placement of additional safety signage at road crossings
- Debris has been removed from the Bristol trailhead and some grading work has been completed
- Organizational meetings were held at The Summit on March 28 (our Spring Gathering) and on May 21
- We have had continued coordination with the City of Bristol, VA related to plans for the trailhead
- We have placed a stone bench near the Tindall Trestle, recognizing the generous donors who made it possible, Bill & Judy Tindall
- We have erected informational and safety signage along areas of the trail

- We had our annual clean-up & work day on 4/13
- We have maintained an on-going collaboration with Washington County authorities to ensure compliance with issues related to land disturbance and construction
- VDOT did significant culvert repair work due to a major washout impacting Rich Valley Rd. and the trail near Benhams...Thank you VDOT!
- We received a substantial grant award from a private foundation



VISIBLE PROGRESS!

The above picture shows the Mendota Trail following work along Cowan Drive.

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Doppelt Grant \$25,000 Award

The Mendota Trail was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund. We were selected from an applicant pool of over 170 projects. The grant is administered by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. For more information, follow this link:

https://www.heraldcourier.com/news/mendota-trail-receives-grant/article_a0be6094-64b3-52cd-89f6-7b3d5bad43be.html

This award is earmarked for helping with initial work on the restoration of the high trestle leading into Benhams. This trestle will be a challenge, as it is 193 feet long and 40 feet above ground. The funds will be used for preliminary engineering and stabilization of the infrastructure.

It is anticipated the total budget for restoration of this trestle will be in the neighborhood of \$125,000. We are seeking corporate and individual donors to help us achieve this goal.

OPENING THE BRISTOL END OF THE MENDOTA TRAIL

Work is currently underway to open the Bristol end of the Mendota Trail. We anticipate this will happen later this summer.



Update on DCR Grant

The preliminary engineering phase of the trail-head project is moving forward.

This has included:

1. Design plans for sewer access and a shelter which will house the restrooms and an area for picnic tables
2. Environmental impact studies
3. Removing old debris on the parcel and installing some safety mesh fencing
4. Creating a gravel path to access the trail in the area of the I-81 underpass

MENDOTA TRAIL T-SHIRTS

Mendota Trail T-Shirts are available at Mountain Sports, Bristol, Virginia for \$20. All proceeds benefit the Mendota Trail.



KROGER REWARDS



Shopping at Kroger with a Rewards Plus Card can now earn money for the Mendota Trail. Register online at <http://www.kroger.com> and link your card to the Mendota Trail.



BY-PASS DECK ON CAMPGROUND ROAD



Jim Lapis designed and constructed this decking along Campground Rd. to cover a significant depression related to a culvert outlet. He was assisted by Bobby Cheers, Bob & Ellen Mueller and Alan Carnell. The end result is a major improvement and safety enhancement.

MORE SUPPORT FROM WASHINGTON COUNTY BOS

The Washington County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a request on April 9, 2019 that the county serve as a fiscal agent for potential Mendota Trail grant funding. This is extremely important as we have been ineligible, as a non-profit, to apply for some grant opportunities. This will open new doors for possible funding sources. Thank you Washington County Board of Supervisors!

Media Exposure

The Mendota Trail was recently featured in an article "A Path Forward", in the March 2019 issue of **Blue Ridge Outdoors**. Two of our volunteers, Eva Beale and Bob Mueller, were cited in the article.

Eva Beale and Ellen Mueller shared the good news of our DCR grant award on a noon segment on WCYB on February 6th. The **Bristol Herald Courier** also carried an article about the DCR grant award.

More recently the **BHC** posted an article about our Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund award on May 31, 2019.

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

#mendotatrail

Thank You To These Donors!

We have benefited from amazing support from several people over the last few months. Professional services and materials were provided at no charge or at a significantly reduced rate. Please support these donors and let them know you appreciate their support of the trail.

- **Dwayne Ball** (Boulder Look Stone Co.stone bench for placement on the trail
- **Mikki Barker** (Web Concepts, LLC)...help with graphics for signage designs
- **The Cheers Family** (Mountain Sports, Ltd.)...host for our clean-up day in April
- **Eric Fields** (The Summit)...facilitator for two organizational meetings and hosted the meeting venue
- **Oscar Harris**...mowing the trail in Mendota
- **Jim Lapis** (Trail volunteer)...materials and significant labor for several projects needed for opening our first 3 miles of trail
- **Dennis Leonard** (Tri-State Signs)...trail signage and decals
- **Steve Mason**...access ramp from the trailhead to the I-81 underpass
- **Miller & Miller Construction**...labor and use of heavy equipment in building our bypass trail on Campground Rd. and Cowan Dr.
- **Adventure Mendota**...mowing the Mendota Trailhead

We also want to acknowledge a generous cash donation from our friends at the **Virginia Creeper Trail**.



Trail adjacent to Campground Road.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need help in several areas:

- Weed whacking & mowing of the trail and trailhead areas
- Physical work related to brush removal
- Fundraising, event planning
- Social media, website maintenance
- Etc., etc.....

We will also need about 20 volunteers (registration help, crossing guards/traffic monitors, help at rider rest stops, etc.) to help with the fund-raising bike ride benefitting the Mendota Trail on Saturday, October 26. Contact us at info@mendotatrail.org if you are interested in becoming more involved. ***We thank you in advance!***

Spring Cleaning and Work Day April 13

Over twenty energetic volunteers attended our annual workday. Several trees were removed, low lying brush was cut back and multiple bags of trash were collected. Thanks to all who participated!



Some of the trash that was collected



Volunteers on the trail

Virginia Highlands Festival “Mendota Day”

The Mendota community will be featured on Friday, August 2. In the morning, popular local historian, Randy Smith, will share stories from the times of Native Americans to when Mendota became more of a farming community. Artifacts will be displayed at the Mendota Clinic and there will be a log cabin house tour.

Bring your picnic lunch or enjoy the amazing delectables from The Store@Mendota.

Afternoon options include kayaking with Adventure Mendota (reservations required), a tour of local farms or a walk on the **Mendota Trail** with Steele Creek’s naturalist, Jeremy Stout.



Here is a link for more information:

<https://vahighlandsfestival.com/event/day-in-mendota/>



PLEASE HELP THE EFFORT!

Building a recreational trail is a daunting task, but the rewards are great! Obvious signs of progress (trail enhancements, water drainage mitigation, signage, etc.) are now apparent. How many would have thought five years ago we would be where we are today? Your contributions have truly made a difference.

We are sincerely grateful for our grant awards, but they are specifically earmarked for submitted project requests and not available for 'repurposing.'

Other expenses are ongoing...many are incurred that aren't so noticeable (insurance, permitting, taxes, engineering and surveying services, etc.).

Please help this effort move forward! We need your financial support to help us get to Benhams!

Send your tax-advantaged contributions to Mountain Heritage Inc., with a notation on the memo line whether you wish your gift to be applied to the Bristol Trailhead or to the more general Mendota Trail Project (there are separate accounts).

Mail to: Mountain Heritage, Inc.
PO Box 1259
St. Paul, VA 24283

Or deliver to: Mountain Sports, Ltd.
1021 Commonwealth Ave.
Bristol, VA 24201

RULES FOR TRAIL USE

Only officially announced portions of the trail (the first mile in Mendota) are open to the public. The rest of the corridor is closed due to dangerous conditions; non-permitted usage is solely at the user's own risk.

Additional rules are:

- The trail is open dawn to dusk
- No trespassing on adjacent private property
- No motorized vehicles
- No hunting or discharge of firearms
- No animals other than leashed, non-vicious dogs; 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 MOUNTAIN HERITAGE, INC., ITS AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS, EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, BOARD MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SAVE THESE DATES!

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|-------|--|
| 07/27 | VCT group ride honoring Lawrence the Legend |
| 08/02 | Virginia Highlands
<u>Day in Mendota</u> |
| 10/05 | Taylor Read Memorial Ride and fundraiser for VCT |
| 10/26 | Metric century (partly on Mendota Trail); will be a fundraiser for the Mendota Trail |

The Store@Mendota



The Store@Mendota is located directly across from the Mendota Trail. It is owned by Katie Harris and operated by Katie; her aunt, Dottie Dye; daughter, Dawn Sims; and sister, Lisa Edwards. The building was built in 1929.



Katie Harris' Sew Lillie brand of children's wear is similar to the popular Matilda Jane line—but they are better as each garment is one of a kind.

When you are thirsty, is there anything better than an old-fashioned Coca Cola served at The Store@Mendota?



Desserts like the apple dumplings pictured below are made fresh daily. Worried about calories? No problem —just head over to the Mendota Trail and walk those calories off!



The Mendota pillow featured below may be custom made with your pictures and your special place or family name. 13"x18" (size is approximate)



The Store@Mendota serves food, is a venue for gatherings, hosts craft classes, and offers local, handmade craft items for sale. It is open six days per week from 10 am until 5 pm.

The Store@Mendota is closed on Wednesdays when the ladies recharge their creative energy and make plans for the coming week.

Want to read more about The Store@Mendota? Follow this link!

https://www.heraldcourier.com/community/restoring-the-store-southwest-virginia-native-partners-reopen-business-that/article_c8b97d39-b5e1-5073-8ea9-d7eee01839e8.html