

Mendota Trail Newsletter

We've Been Busy!

Since the time of our last newsletter, we have focused on preservation needs related to Trestles 14 and 13. Fortunately, this work was complete prior to the recent downpours that caused significant rises in the creek levels spanned by these two trestles. In the absence of the timely repairs, it is likely they would have sustained significant damage.

The work crew has moved on to completing restoration work on Trestle 4. This trestle, sponsored by Rick and Doreen Heppert, is likely the most frequently viewed by the public as it crosses Benhams Rd. It is already shaping up to be another beauty!

We will have updated announcements in our upcoming newsletters. Please continue to enjoy our open sections of trail.

New Mendota Trail T-Shirts

Show your support for the Mendota Trail by wearing our t-shirts! For 2021, we have new colors and a new design. These tees come in Small, Medium, Large, XL, XXL and a limited supply of 3XL. Mendota Trail t-shirts are available for \$25 at Mountain Sports, LTD at 1021 Commonwealth Avenue, Bristol, VA or The Store @ Mendota (when it opens). All proceeds from the sale of these t-shirts benefit the Mendota Trail.



Save the Trestles Update

Urgently needed repairs and stabilization of Trestles 14 and 13 have recently been completed by the hard-working team from Inland Construction.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to this campaign! Your generous gifts truly made a difference!

Special thanks to Ben and Anne Cowan who stepped up and provided a match of \$20,000.



We have now focused our energies on restoration work on Trestle 4 in Benhams.

APRIL 24, 2021

CELEBRATE TRAILS — DAY —

rails-to-trails
conservancy

The third Saturday of April is officially designated as “**Celebrate Trails Day**”. Started by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in 2013, the celebration encourages people all across the country to get outside and enjoy the nation’s trails.

We encourage you to take a few minutes to volunteer (pick up litter), walk and/or bike on a trail near you. We visited the Rails-to-Trails website and found great recommendations. One of our favorites, however, included suggestions for how your dog might want to celebrate Trails Day with you.

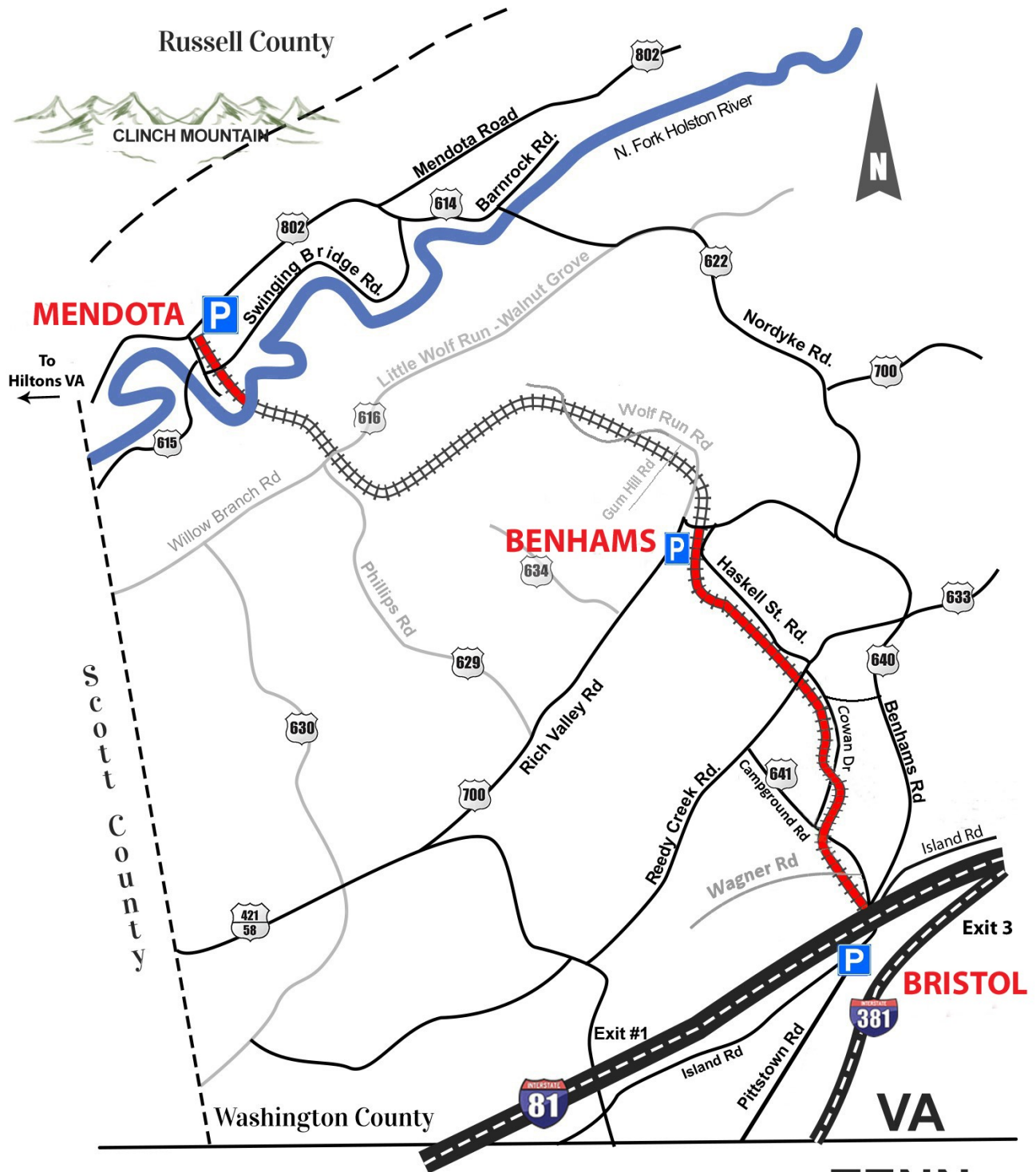
Four tips were provided:

- Plan ahead. Trail walking with your leashed dog should be done at a time when the trail has less traffic-- such as early morning-- or pick a trail that you know is less used than other trails. As a young trail, we are finding the **Mendota Trail** is a perfect place to walk your dog.

- Bring water and snacks for your dog along with a bag for picking up waste.
- Know your dog’s limitations based on age, weight and health. If your dog is new to trail walking, start slow and build up to longer more challenging walks.
- Practice trail etiquette keeping your dog on a shorter leash when approaching others and ensure the dog’s collar is appropriately sized not to come off.
- Have fun! Trail walking with your dog is a great way to solidify your bond with your pet. It’s also a way to meet others as dog people are typically friendly people.



River takes a brief rest while walking on the **Mendota Trail**.



Open sections designated in red



TENN

Parking Locations:

Bristol: trailhead beside 1788 Island Rd.

Benhams: across from 7741 Rich Valley Rd.

Mendota: trailhead across from 2421 Mendota Rd.

Food City Pledges \$20,000 to Mendota Trail

Steve Smith, CEO of K-VA-T Food Stores (Food City) announced a significant donation to the Mendota Trail project on February 18, 2021. The total pledge of \$20,000 will be provided at \$5,000 per year for 4 years. Mr. Smith recognized the Mendota Trail as being a worthwhile endeavor that will be an economic benefit to the region. He challenged other individuals and corporations to a similar sponsorship in support of the trail. Food City has a long history of community-oriented involvement. The Mendota Trail Conservancy (MTC) is extremely grateful for this contribution and his personal endorsement.

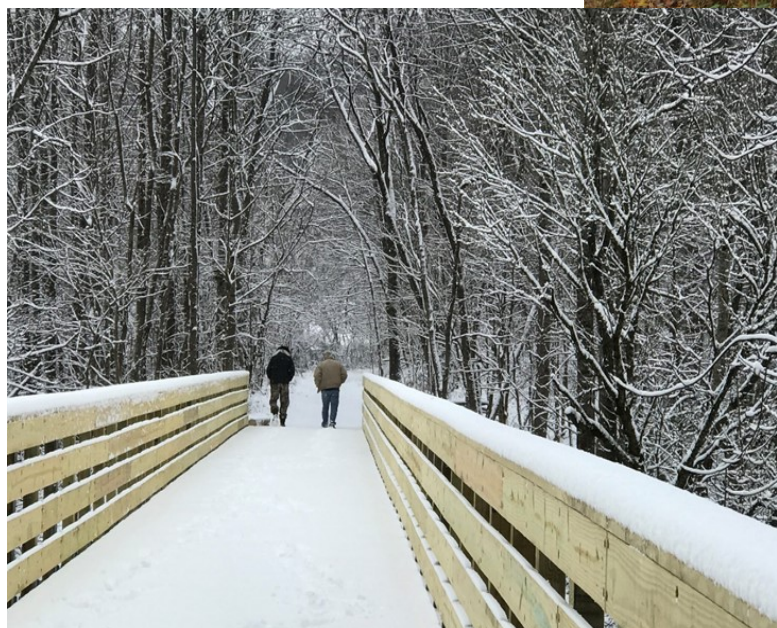


Photo, left to right: Delegate Israel O'Quinn, Delegate Will Wampler, Jim Lapis (MTC), Steve Smith (CEO, Food City), Bob Mueller (MTC), Bobby Cheers (MTC), Randy Olson (MTC)



A trail for all seasons.....

Autumn group hike



Trestle 3 following December snowfall

Spring busting out on the trail





**A trail for all
to enjoy.....**

A jogger on a morning run

A happy dog
leading the way



A young family on an outing



**Massengill-DeFriece Foundation
Donates
\$20,000 for Development of the
Bristol Trailhead**

The Mendota Trail received a very generous donation of \$20,000 from the Massengill-DeFriece Foundation in December 2020 to further the development of the Bristol Trailhead.

In addition to improvements to the parking area, there will be an ADA accessible ramp leading to the trail, which will be ADA compliant for the first half mile. The preliminary engineering phase is nearing completion and the construction phase will begin later this year. A portion of the cost will be funded by a federal grant, but the remaining amount will be the responsibility of the Mendota Trail Conservancy.

Massengill-DeFriece is a private foundation that has been giving back to our region since the 1950's. The Mendota Trail Conservancy is very appreciative for their donation and support to make this segment of the trail accessible to all people. Thank you!



We greatly appreciate the assistance provided by the following businesses.....

Casey Bledsoe with Turner Leasing Storage To Go - Glade Spring, VA (donated use of container for staging construction projects)

Eric Fields with The Summit Companies - Bristol, TN (provided meeting space and expertise related to organizational development)

Inland Construction, Inc. - Abingdon, VA (provided gifted construction services on several needed projects)

Taff & Frye Company, Inc. – Bristol, VA (supplied large timbers from some of their previous demolition work)



A Final Touch for Trestle 3

Final phases of construction work on Trestle 3 were covered by an extension of an appropriation request supported by **Senator Todd Pillion**. This \$50,000 appropriation came our way from the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Jason Berry, our friends with Washington County government and the Board of Supervisors were instrumental in facilitating the process. What a team! We are extremely grateful to all. The completion of Trestle 3 was critical for opening our trail all the way from Bristol to Benhams.



Construction Advisory



We expect construction work will begin at the Bristol Trailhead off of Island Road this summer. We are currently exploring alternatives for vehicle parking for our trail users.

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 tow-away zone.

The Benhams parking area will remain open.



The Store @ Mendota

The Store @ Mendota is opening a bit later than planned as they recover from a furnace malfunction. Katie Harris anticipates repairs being complete in late April or early May. Rest assured, the ladies at The Store are anxious to see their Mendota Trail friends and serve those yummy desserts and sandwiches. Likewise, they are excited to offer a new patio for an improved outdoor dining experience. Once open, the hours of The Store will be Wednesday thru Sunday, 11 am until 5 pm.

We will keep you posted.....there will be a big announcement on our Facebook page!



*In
Loving
Memory*

Please give thought to joining donors who have recently made special gifts to our trail effort:

- Patty & Tommy Caldwell, in memory of Barbara P. Smith, an early supporter of the trail
- Linda Sheets Brockman-Huber, in memory of her grandparents, James & Minnie Hendricks
- MTC Board, in memory of Senator Ben Chafin

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 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!

Call for Old Photos and Stories...

We are seeking historic photos to add to our existing collection. Ultimately, we hope to have a publication sharing the history of the former railroad and its impact on the communities of Bristol, Benhams and Mendota. In addition, the photos will be part of a display in the Mendota History Room at the Community Center.



Benhams Station, K. Fleener



Phillips Station, S. Fiene

We are also interested in collecting written narratives and oral histories. Photos will be scanned with the original copy being returned to the owner. If you have a photo contribution or a story to share, please contact us at:

info@mendotatrail.org



Our Board is actively seeking volunteers who are interested in serving on the following committees:

- Finance
- Fundraising
- Communications

If interested, contact us at:

info@mendotatrail.org



Your Donations Make a Difference!

We are an all-volunteer organization, so your entire contribution is used to help us work to open more trail and maintain currently opened sections.

Please mail your donations of support to:

Mendota Trail
P.O. Box 1322
Bristol, VA 24203

Thank you so much.
We appreciate 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 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 SIX MILES OF TRAIL THAT ARE CURRENTLY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. DO NOT TRESPASS ON POSTED SEGMENTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.



Recent News Articles About Our Trail

Washington County News.....Growing Support for the Trail by Joe Tennis, 11/18/2020

https://swvatoday.com/news/article_635c1554-c516-568f-a0ff-d84a2e5b20f7.html

The TimesNews.....Trail Becoming an Area Gem by Tanner Cook, 11/29/2020

https://www.timesnews.net/living/outdoors/mendota-trail-quickly-becoming-an-area-gem/article_ed817a5a-332d-11eb-91fe-9f5f6ab41a0a.html

VDOT Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Newsletter, Jan. 2021

The TimesNews.....Trail is Seeking Funds by Tanner Cook, 2/1/2021

https://www.timesnews.net/living/outdoors/mendota-trail-seeks-funds-for-trestle-repair/article_3e532fc0-64aa-11eb-be0e-6febb2c16f88.html

Bristol Herald Courier.....Food City Donation for the Trail by David Crigger, 2/19/2021

https://heraldcourier.com/news/food-city-donates-20-000-to-mendota-trail-project/article_062baa86-6baf-5450-a1a4-5fc08a2e803c.html

Bristol Herald Courier.....Potential for Connector Trail to City Center by David McGee, 2/23/2021

https://heraldcourier.com/news/mendota-trail-may-connect-to-bristol/article_18a0cf45-2f8b-5bf6-a2f6-cb6fba7a44b6.html

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