Clinch River Valley Initiative  
October 10, 2012; 3:30 – 5:30 pm  
Cove Ridge Center, Natural Tunnel State Park, Duffield, Virginia

Meeting Summary

Introduction and Overview

Forty people met at Cove Ridge Center in Duffield, Virginia on October 10, 2012 for a Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) meeting. Christine Gyovai and Frank Dukes from the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN) at the University of Virginia facilitated the meeting. This meeting was the ninth in a series, originating with the first meeting in September 2010, titled Building Local Economies in Southwest Virginia. The most recent meeting was held on August 8, 2012; previous meeting summaries may be found at the website (www.clinchriverva.com).

The facilitators welcomed participants to the meeting, discussed meeting guidelines, and asked for updates from around the region. An update was given about a CRVI Steering Committee meeting that was held prior to the larger CRVI meeting. Below are highlights from the large group discussion at the meeting, updates from each of the action groups, a summary from each of the discussions of the small groups, and a summary of next steps for the Clinch River Valley Initiative. Other updates included a Trails to Health Initiative, an Appalachian Communities and Economics series (see the events section of the CRVI website for more details), and other upcoming events.

Action Group Updates

• The Downtown Revitalization, Entrepreneurship, & Marketing Action Group has hired Brandi Hall as the Entrepreneur Coordinator. This position was created through a partnership with VTC/UVA-Wise/VEI. The Babcock Foundation did not fund the CRVI request, which included funding logo development and printing for maps and brochures (however there could be future funding opportunities). The Action Team is working on other funding resources for implementing these needs.

• The Access Points Action Group is continuing site determinations and landowner negotiations for the targeted public access locations with the pilot project region on the Clinch. There is a potential access point development in Cleveland. A final draft of Public Access Best Practices document has been reviewed by both the Action Group and Steering Committee and will be shared with the larger CRVI group. Virginia Tech’s Community Design and Assistance Center potentially could assist in developing conceptual plans for access locations, especially signage, landscaping, and visitor amenities. An Outdoor Recreation Development Specialist (PT) will be hired as part of the ARC grant. Pam Cox, of Scott County, has agreed to serve as the...
group co-chair. The next group meeting is scheduled for November 6th at 10 a.m. at the Heart of Appalachia Tourism office in St. Paul, VA.

- The **Environmental Education Action Group** will be hosting an Educational Symposium on March 25, 2013, likely at St. Paul Elementary School and outdoor spaces around St. Paul. A $5,000 grant was received from Dominion Foundation for the Symposium, but the group is still waiting to hear back on a small grant request to TVA. Information and Invitations are to be sent out ASAP to Superintendents and then to individual teachers 7 - 10 days later. The symposium may include counties outside of the watershed, but that will be determined by the initial response from Superintendents and teachers. The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 7th at Wetlands Estonoa in St. Paul, VA.

- The **Water Quality Action Group** is looking at additional ways, including staffing, to move the action group ideas forward. The NFWF grant is still pending. The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable hired Lisa Harris to help coordinate 4 - 5 Clinch River clean up events, which will include collecting white goods (discarded appliances), as part of the Blue Moon Fund/ARC grants. Keep an eye out for dates to help with clean ups.

- The **State Park Action Group** - The final approval for the ARC grant has been given. Chmura Economics & Analytics has been given the go-ahead to begin work on an economic impact study for a potential Clinch River State Park, which is to be completed in approximately two months. Lou Wallace of St. Paul Tomorrow and Chuck Reidhammer of Southwest Regional Recreation Authority/Spearhead Trails presented at the Virginia Association for Parks fall conference. The purpose of the presentation was to inform the VAEP about the recent groundswell of community interest in the creation of a new Clinch River State Park and to let them know that DCR has completed studies that strongly recommend the creation of a Clinch River State Park. VAEP was very supportive and noted how positive it is to see the desire for a park coming from an organized grassroots effort. They are also now aware that there is a CRVI Resolution of Support that we will be sent to them for their consideration. The Resolution of Support is being worked on by a subcommittee of the Steering Committee, and will be shared in the fall of 2012.

**Action Group Breakout Meeting Notes**

Following the first part of the CRVI meeting with Action Group updates, participants broke into five groups around the five CRVI goal areas to discuss and help plan next steps for each of the action groups. Each of the action groups will continue to meet outside of broader CRVI meetings. Meeting notes from each group are listed below.
**Downtown Revitalization, Entrepreneurship, & Marketing Action Group**

*Participants:* Laura Mack, Doug Jackson, Buzz Witt, Margie Douglass, Nathan Ormes, Kitty Barker, Todd Christensen, Barry Abromovage, Rod Curly, Luke Juday

The Downtown Revitalization group began by updating everyone on the presentation of "Get to know a Community" to town councils. They visited the Town of Cleveland at the beginning of October with the new Mayor and the tourism committee. They visited a beautiful waterfall within the town limits, a downtown park that has access to the Clinch River, and an abandoned school that has an active ballpark. One idea has been to tear down the school and replace it with a campground on the Clinch. During these visits to different communities, they have been looking for things that could be successful right away. An adventure tourism building right on the river would be desirable.

The action group can help towns by funding projects for downtowns, connecting parks with downtowns by bike trails, getting USDA grants, and with future planning. The group can also help with the "Power of Ten" idea - once you get ten things together that people want to see, and then you've got something. The group can fill in the gaps to get the ten things like bike races, unique wildlife areas, and a varmint race.

The next town visit will be to Dungannon. A date needs to be set up for November. Other towns that will be visited are Tazewell, Cedar Bluffs, and Richlands. These could also be visited in November. It would be helpful if DCR and the Nature Conservancy came.

A goal for the group is to create two inventories. The first inventory will be for hotels, restaurants, pharmacies, hospitals, care centers, gas stations, etc. The inventory should include drive times and distance from the river. The inventory should be thorough because we want people to spend the night and do other things in the area. The second inventory will be of rental and sale properties - commercial and residential. It will help promote new businesses in certain locations.

Brandi Hall is the new entrepreneurship coordinator. Three strategies were created for entrepreneurship. First build an entrepreneurial ecosystem, then help entrepreneurs get to the next level of business development, and, lastly, promote the region as an entrepreneurial hub.

The proposal to the Babcock Foundation that would have supported marketing was not approved. The team hopes this brand becomes the overarching umbrella brand for the whole Clinch River. There should be a regional identity within the brand. It should become a tool for the localities.

The next steps are to look for more funding opportunities that could get $7,500 (Barry is in charge) to help assist with logo development and marketing.

**Access Points Action Group**

*Participants:* Jackie Stump, Cathy Johnson, Jack McClanahan, James "Skip" Sheets, Pam Cox, Christine Gyovai, Althea Kannae
The Public Access Points began by introducing Pam Cox as the new action group co-chair. The first action agreed upon was that Pam Cox will continue to work on arrangements for oversight of the new position, including looking into potential locations that could host this person. Discussions about this position included: possibilities of the position being an internship, where the position will be located (should it be centrally located or have a rotating host), how many hours total are available for this position. The group indicated that the pilot project should be the first priority on the work plan and this could dictate where the position is based.

Another issue discussed was the DGIF grant. Members emphasized the importance of coordinating with relevant agencies, particularly the Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries. Jackie Stump will be doing outreach for potential upcoming meetings with Bob Duncan, director of DGIF, regarding access points.

The next action that the group agreed upon is that Pam Cox will connect the IEN interns working on mapping to the Scott County '911 mapping' project for CRVI map development.

The last item discussed was that progress has been made on specific access points. Miller Yard should no longer be considered as a potential site because of leasing difficulties and required clean up. Old Castlewood is a good site with a few concerns and the Mayor has made a breakthrough with the landowner. Burtons Ford needs a follow up with the landowner about feasibility and an investigation about stability (Cathy Johnson will look into this). If no other access points could be found, then the pilot area might need to be changed to include these areas: north of Old Castlewood or Cleveland, the old restaurant site with river frontage on highway 23, Dungannon, Fort Blackmore, Slant, Hill Station, and Stock Creek. These areas will need further discussion. It was suggested that the group get out on the river to investigate further. A final suggestion was that the group could consider expanding the pilot project to reach from Cleveland to Fort Blackmore.

The next meeting of the group is November 6th at 10 a.m. at the Heart of Appalachia Tourism office in St. Paul.

Environmental Education

Participants: Helen Lewis, James Dye, Megan France, Lucas Lyons, Pike Brynildsen

Wally Smith of UVA-Wise agreed to be a third co-chair of the Environmental Education action group, and will work to connect the group to efforts at UVA-Wise around mapping wildlife, trails and other naturalist programs. This includes an online mapping application being worked on by the Biology Department at UVA-Wise. This application allows hikers take pictures of wildlife and upload them to a map. The application uses a smart phone’s GPS to position the point on the map. This application has become popular among Appalachian Trail hikers.

The Environmental Education Action group also discussed upcoming events and projects, including a Cinch River Educational Symposium on March 25, 2013, likely at St. Paul Elementary School and outdoor spaces around St. Paul. The group will also help
coordinate the development of environmental education signage at new access points on the Clinch River as part of the ARC grant.

Overall goals for environmental education in the Clinch River Valley include adventure tourism, growth of outfitters, continued state and national park programs, oral history projects organized by the colleges, promoting Cove Ridge Center projects, float trips that have oral histories included, healthy lifestyles initiatives (triathlons, exercising, eating right, water facts), and cultural festivals.

One initiative that could be installed is the "Clean Glass of Water" initiative. This would be a school program where students learn where their water comes from. The action group could create lesson plans for different grade levels to help teachers. There are water questions on the SOLs that this initiative could address. This could also satisfy high school students’ need to learn about the whole watershed.

The plans for the next three to six months include more advertising for park service programs, deciding what age group to target for educational programs, and creating a list of suggestions that the education committee could do for education.

Things that could be improved are:
- Beginner outdoor recreation programs (how to start camping or beginner mountain biking)
- Good signage to promote areas, use of internet to promote parks and surrounding areas
- Community college courses for adventure tourism
- A directory for outdoor adventure (sample itinerary for a trip to the region and the ability to plan vacations)
- Self guided tours (on mp3 players or phones)
- Community projects (especially for kids, but also to build a sense of community)
- Oral history projects

**Water Quality Action Group**

Participants: Chris Clark, Kathy Selvage, Monica Appleby, Brad Stallard, Barbara Williamson, Abbey Ness, Patrick Torborg

The Water Quality Action Group began the meeting by discussing action items in progress. The first action item discussed was the river cleanup and white goods collection events. Chris Clark will follow up with Lisa Harris to determine a schedule for the events. The next item was the outreach publications targeted toward local citizens. There was concern about the approach of the group, and members spent several minutes clarifying the reasoning behind certain action items. This led to a discussion of other group goals, including the need to map pollutants of the Clinch River of all types, improving regional sewage infrastructure and education of the public.

During this discussion, IEN graduate associates volunteered to map some of the existing conditions of the Clinch River. The eventual goal of the group is to find a local university student(s) who can partner with the group for all mapping activities. Chris, Kathy and
Barbara will be following up with contacts at various universities who may be able to help create a job description or find funding for this student.

The group also discussed the potential of the desired VISTA position and RiverKeeper positions. The VISTA position is intended to be a short-term, technical position that can assist with the achievement of group goals. The RiverKeeper position is one that focuses more on outreach and education. To encourage the creation of these positions, group members will draft a job description before the next meeting.

Brad Stallard will send sewage infrastructure data to the group that will inform future courses of action. Group members also discussed the importance of outreach publications as a means of educating people of all ages. Methods of outreach mentioned included newspaper inserts, mailings, and the watershed report cards that had been created by Josh Larsen. Watershed report cards created by The Sierra Club and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation will be referenced as examples of how to display this information. The Bonner Program at Emory and Henry may be a useful reference as well. These publications would also include maps of polluted areas of the Clinch.

At this point in the meeting, the group discussed ways to make group efforts more effective. Members decided that working meetings were needed to move forward with action items, and Kathy volunteered to organize such meetings, which at first will focus on creating outreach publications and mapping.

There was a suggestion to find outside groups to partner with or to recruit new members to increase the capacity of the Water Quality group. How to share information was briefly discussed, but no method was determined before the end of the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on November 13th from 12-2 pm, possibly at the Tacoma Center. The co-chairs will send an e-mail to clarify the time and place. Please e-mail Chris Clark at clinchcoalition@gmail.com or Kathy Selvage at kselvage@gmail.com for more information about how to be involved in the Water Quality Action Group.

State Park Action Group

Participants: Jerry Fouse, Steve Lindeman, Robert Chapman, Jason Knickmeyer, Frank Dukes

The State Park group opened with a round of introductions and quickly proceeded into a discussion about how the group envisioned the possible Clinch River State Park. A recreation management specialist from the Tennessee Valley Authority, Jerry Fouse, as well as Robert Chapman, the manager of Natural Tunnel State Park, joined chair Steve Lindeman and offered valuable insight into how those two groups would respond to this initiative and how they could help.

The original thinking had been that a state park on the Clinch River would be more like the New River State Park, which owns some land and islands as well as campgrounds and other recreational areas. The New River Park is a “linear” state park, meaning that it is laid out in a continuous linear stretch along a park of the New River. However, it was decided that it wouldn’t be possible to model a state park along the Clinch River in the same way. Instead, the proposed park would have to be more of a string of access points that could not necessarily be grouped adjacently. This layout, however, might be difficult to manage because it would require holding many separate properties.
The idea therefore came about to either make it a private park with arrangements for access points in different locations or to purchase some property (or to acquire an easement) so there would be a mixture of separate sites. Within this model, it is possible that some of these sites would be either owned by DCR or would be placed on some of the preserves that already exist. The idea then developed to what it is now: the creation of a series of launch sites (possibly with outfitters) that could accommodate a wide variety of people, all of which could potentially be managed by DCR state parks.

The joining of multiple different properties together to make one larger site with a center on it remains a possibility because DCR traditionally wants a park to consist of one large chunk of land, which is usually greater than 600 acres. However, the group had trouble with the idea of having one large central park with separate satellite launch sites and proposed that having two separate, moderately large sites would be preferable.

An important question addressed in the group was, "If the park was to be separated into multiple different land parcels, would these two or three separate parcels need to equal more than 600 acres to qualify?" The DCR representative answered that for the most part, the parks are all together in one parcel. Some parks, however, start with very limited acreage and grow over time, like what happened with Natural Tunnel Park (which started with around 100 acres and is now 1,000 acres). Additionally, as the park expands it becomes easier for it to add to the park's offered programs. In the case of Natural Tunnel State Park, the new acquisition of a piece of land that is separate from the rest of the park is serving as the park's new launch site for watercraft.

The TVA representative, Jerry Fouse, then began to talk about TVA landholding and activity in the area of the proposed Clinch River Park. He mentioned that the TVA owns some land parcels ranging in size from 0.75 to 2 acres along the Clinch River valley that may become available for purchase. Jerry added that the TVA would support the protection of water resources upstream of one of its dams, which could be the case if the Clinch River Park was founded.

In response to a question about what the TVA could do to help the initiative, Jerry Fouse responded that TVA funds are tied up in a major project to expand the power generating capacity of the company, partly so that they can begin utilizing newer and cleaner forms of energy production and close down their smokestacks. However, after this expansion the TVA will probably have money to spend on other enterprises. The CRVI is just the kind of initiative that the TVA has historically provided land and funding.

It was mentioned that the State Park action group needed to have a sort of fund to supply for the trips that people are making in the name of the initiative. The group then discussed that there were a lot of other areas that were already working to become state parks, and that this meant that the Clinch River Valley Initiative's state park proposal could be low on the list unless is could procure a solid source of funding. It then established that the DCR was not currently looking to purchase any land, so that was not an option at present.

**Action Group updates and next steps**

After the action groups met as small groups, meeting participants came back together to share what the groups had talked about and discussed next steps for the CRVI.
Downtown Revitalization Action Group

- Barry will look for more funding opportunities ($7,500).
- Plan the next town visit to Dungannon in November.
- Plan visits to Tazewell, Cedar Bluffs, and Richlands.

Access Points Action Group

- Pam Cox will continue to work on arrangements for oversight of new position including looking into potential locations.
- Pam Cox will connect IEN interns to Scott County’s "911 mapping."
- The Group could further consider expanding the pilot project area to reach from Cleveland to Fort Blackmore.

Environmental Education Action Group

- Create a list of suggestions that the education committee could do for education.
- Continue advertising park service programs and adventure tourism.
- Connect with other CRVI action groups to integrate environmental education action items.

Water Quality Action Group

- Chris Clark will follow up with Lisa Harris to determine a schedule for river cleanup events.
- In regards to mapping, Chris, Kathy and Barbara will be following up with contacts at various universities who may be able to help create a job description or find funding for this student.
- Group members will draft a RiverKeeper job description before the next meeting.
- Brad Stallard will send sewage infrastructure data to the group that will help inform future courses of action.

State Park Action Group

- Continue to brainstorm funding opportunities.
- Funding will make the Clinch River State Park a higher priority compared to other areas wishing to become a state park.

Next Meeting

The facilitators then announced that the next meeting likely would be in December or January. The Dungannon Depot was mentioned as a possible site for the meeting. Any questions about CRVI may be sent to Christine Gyovai at christineg@virginia.edu or 434-
982-6464, or Frank Dukes at FrankDukes@virginia.edu, or 434-924-2041. The CRVI website will continue to be updated with next steps for each of the action groups and the overall Initiative at www.clinchriverva.com.

**Meeting Participants**

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<th>Laura Mack</th>
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<td>Doug Jackson</td>
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