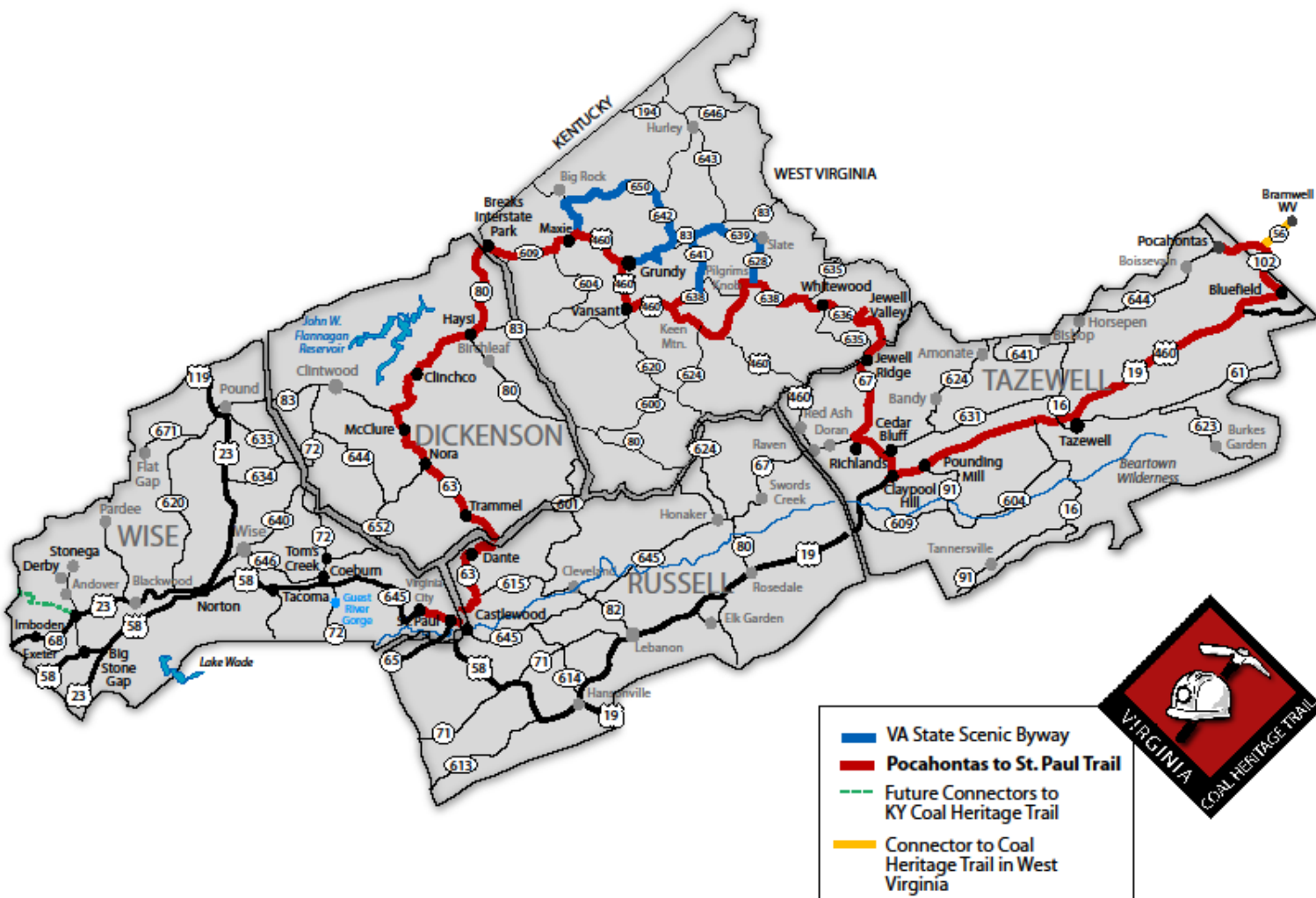




CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

ACTION PLAN For the Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail Through the counties of Tazewell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell into Wise



In the following section is an overview of the recommendations and plan for action for the Pocahontas section of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail based on town meetings held in Pocahontas, Richlands, Grundy, Haysi, McClure, Dante and St. Paul and follow-up conversations. For details on these meetings, see APPENDIX H.

Please Note: All items noted in **red** on the action plan pertain to coal-related sites while **blue** describes road conditions. All recommendations are noted in **purple** while any action taken is noted in **green**.



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN

Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

ACTION PLAN

For the Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Through the counties of Tazewell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell into Wise

Red - Coal-related site Blue – Road Description Purple – Recommendations Green – Action Taken

Featured areas:

Pocahontas:

- **Pocahontas Exhibition Mine – PRIORITY SITE – Signature site for the entire byway. Needs to be maintained and open to the public. This one site sets the byway off from all others.**
- **Pocahontas Coal Museum – Recommend to become the Visitor Center for the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail**
 1. To become a true visitor center for the Coal Heritage Trail and the start of the byway, the museum needs some renovations including, but not limited to: Kiosks, maps of the route, better lighting, etc.
 - Displays of sections of the route to encourage people to travel the byway.
 - Each county/ along the route may want to develop their own display to showcase sites to visit along the route. Some of these displays could be designed in such a way that they could be moved to other sites during special events, state fairs, etc.
 - Better lighting is needed throughout the entire structure.
 - Current displays could be expanded to include some hands on, more interactive exhibits.
 - Potential for an expanded gift shop
 2. Amenities currently available: Restroom facilities, parking
 1. What else might the site provide:
 - Camping for RV's and tents?
- **Downtown Pocahontas – (See Hills Studio Study for more on this)**
 1. Reestablish a walking/driving tour for downtown Pocahontas. Brochures can be distributed at the Pocahontas Coal Museum and other stops along the way to encourage people to stop and visit the downtown area.
 2. Where to park and start tour?
 3. Interpretive signs (Where?)
 4. Tourist amenities? (Food, Lodging, Restroom facilities – All are needed.)
 - There is a proposed restaurant and lodging facility at the High School.
 - Some of the houses in the downtown areas would make excellent Bed & Breakfasts.
 5. A few worthwhile stops in Historic Pocahontas. There are more. All need to be included on the tour.
 - **Company Store**
 1. This building is beyond saving but it is highly recommended that a replica of the building be constructed at this same location.
 2. This should be a priority project for the community due to the significant role the company store played in the community.
 3. The front could be recreated into a general store, much as it was in the past.
 4. The back could be developed into shops and offices with the upstairs used for both apartments and guest lodging.



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN **Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail**

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

- **Company Office Building**
- **Company Hospital**
- **Superintendent's Home**
- **A number of company houses**
- **Cricket Saloon**
- **Churches including the**
- **Butt's Casket Company where hundreds of caskets were made after a major mining accident although none of the caskets were ever used....Just one of the many stories.**

Action Taken: Hills Studio has developed a detailed plan and the community is now seeking funding to implement.

6. Pocahontas has recently become ATV and golf cart friendly within their downtown area. – *Strongly encourage the establishment of trails and provide the services within the community to entice people to come to the area to ride and stay multiple days.* Please note: Federal funding through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is available of both nonmotorized and motorized trails.

Strongly recommend all of this occur for Pocahontas to economically benefit from visitors coming into the area. Pocahontas needs to be visitor-ready. At this time, there are limited amenities available to encourage spending. Restaurants, lodging, and shops are needed.

Action Taken: ATV Trail plans have been developed and are ready to be constructed.

Side trip to Bramwell's Coal Heritage Visitor Center

1. Need information and maps at this center on the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail and vice versa.
2. Need directional signage to and from this site along the connector road Hwy 56.

Note: Use the WV Coal Heritage Trail logo when headed towards Bramwell and the VA Coal Heritage Trail logo when headed towards Pocahontas.

Action Taken: Preliminary discussions with the Coal Heritage Trail of West Virginia are currently taking place. A meeting was held in December 2010 with representatives from both states to move the initiative forward.

ROAD DESCRIPTION: HWY 102 – Two lane, curvy and very rural

Falls Mill:

- Historical sign about engagement at the Falls
 1. **Need pull off to read the sign and to take photos of the falls themselves for their scenic beauty. Worthwhile Photo Op stop.**

Bluefield:

- **Existing Visitor Center should provide Interpretive information, maps etc. of the trail.**
 - **Need better signage directing people to the Visitor Center.**
- Other coal-related sites in Bluefield to include on trail? Information at the college?
- **The Last Fountain Restaurant and unique knife shop should be noted as worthwhile stops along the route.** Other worthwhile stops?
- Tourist amenities in area: Food, Lodging, Gas



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN

Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

ROAD DESCRIPTION: **HWY 460 – 4-Lane with grass median.** **Numerous billboards distract from beauty of the mountains.** **Billboard issue needs to be addressed and a regulation established along the entire byway in regards to any future outdoor advertising signage that does not relate to what one will see along the route.**

Tazewell

- Second Exit offers gas, restaurants and tourism information:
 - Tazewell Area Chamber of Commerce which would be an excellent location to distribute maps, brochures and information on the coal heritage trail. Displaying brochures should be no issue. They have a brochure display case already in place and were extremely helpful when questions were asked about the trail.
 1. **Could a display on the Coal Heritage Trail be set up at this site?**
 2. Are restroom facilities available to the traveling public?
Existing amenities: Ample parking, staff, regular hours
 - **Coal Bucket Deli** and some of the other restaurants at this site might be willing to also display information on the trail and provide maps and brochures especially during those times when the Chamber is not open.
 - Question? Lodging nearby? Other side trips worth noting within the community of Tazewell that might entice people to visit the downtown area while traveling the byway?

Crab Orchard

- Tourism Kiosk already in existence
 1. **Need to make sure it includes brochures of the Coal Trail and a map of the route.** *Short-term – Who will be responsible for this?*
- **Crab Orchard Museum – Already has a display on coal and a timeline that showcases coal mining in the region**
 1. **Need to set up a a display specifically on the Coal Heritage Trail, in particularly highlighting key sites along the route.**
 2. **This is also an excellent location to include some coal equipment with interpretive signage describing their uses either near the building or across the street at the Tourism Kiosk.**
Existing amenities: Ample parking, staff, regular hours, restroom facilities
Short-term – Who needs to be contacted to make this happen?
- Other worthwhile stops at this site:
 - Pisgah United Methodist Church which does have a historic marker but could use a better pull-off to read it.
 - There is also a wildlife viewing sign just down from the historic marker
 1. **A pull-off at this site for a photo op of the church could also be a location to include information about what one might expect to find at this wildlife viewing stop.**

Pounding Mill Area

- Cuz's Restaurant – Worthwhile stop for its unique and quirky character.
Needs to be noted on brochures and on information about the byway.
- Cuz's Cabins also available for lodging.
- Pounding Mill Quarry actually could be a pull off with interpretive information as to the process. It definitely draws one's attention to the site.



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN **Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail**

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

Claypool Mill - Very commercial area

- Will serve as an “Oasis” on the tour offering Lodging, Food, Gas and supplies

Cedar Bluff

- Cedar Bluff Scenic Trail – **Needs to be noted.**
 1. Excellent opportunity to stretch ones legs and enjoy the walk or drive to the top.
- Worthwhile side trip through Cedar Bluff includes:
 - a grist mill,
 - loader,
 - Virginia Civil War Trail interpretive sign and pull-off with picnic area
 - Swinging bridge – There are very few left along the route. **Efforts should be made to preserve those remaining whenever possible.**
 - Amenities noted:
 - Excellent restaurant called Stir-N-Dip-A-Tea which specializes in soup, sandwiches and desserts. **Should be included when marketing the byway.**

Recommend making this loop through Cedar Bluff the primary route, taking them off Hwy 460 for about 1 mile before reentering Hwy 460. (Immediate) –
– Action Taken - Examples sent to Coal Heritage Trail Advisory Committee members for Tazewell County (Ginger Branton and Margie Douglass) 11-8-10 of what the town of Cedar Bluff needs to do to make this happen.

Richlands

- **A Signature stop is the Coal Miner Memorial of the Commonwealth at the Town Hall of Richlands. Ample parking and always open to the public.**
 - **Need coal heritage signage directing the traveler to this site. If you are not from there, the one-way roads get confusing. (Immediate) - See signage recommendations in Chapter VIII – Series of Town Meetings: Richlands -Tazewell Co. Action Taken: Richlands Chamber of Commerce Ginger Branton is working on this.**

Amenities: Community also offers food, lodging, gas, restroom facilities and, with better directional signage, could be visitor-ready very quickly.

- **Need walking /driving tour developed for all historic sites, both coal and railroad in the Richlands historic downtown.**
 - Section House for the railroad, Chamber, Shraders, Library, bank, a number of buildings along Washington Square. Include Coffee Station and L'Venia restaurants, coal miner's memorial and other sites such as War Memorial, location and copies of murals including those in the Teen Venture Center as well as those featured at Southwest Community College in the Davis Hall Mining Educational, Occupational & Technical Building.
Immediate
 - **Action Taken: Richlands Chamber of Commerce Ginger Branton and Gaynell Thompson, Historian are currently working on this.**

- **Section House should be developed into an interpretive center for both coal and rail.**
NOTE: Immediate action should be taken to preserve and renovate this facility.
 - Good location to share the interconnection of both. Also provide a display of the by-products of coal – plastic, medicine.



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN

Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

- **Red - Coal-related site** **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

- Strategic location as one enters the historic district of downtown Richlands overlooking the railroad. Excellent start for the historic walking trail through the downtown area.
- Ample parking and easy access to the Chamber and Coffee Station Restaurant across the street.
- Easy walking distance to the historic buildings on Washington Square and
- View of Richlands school underneath the metal siding. A story to tell...



- **Action Taken:** *Through efforts by the community, the section house has been saved and funding is now being sought to turn it into an interpretive center for both the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail and the rich railroad history in the region. (September 2011).*
- **Better Coal Heritage signage is needed to direct travelers through downtown Richlands.** See Chapter VIII: Series of Town Meetings: Richlands -Tazewell County for details as to the number of signs needed and their placement within the community.
- Other sites include both murals and memorials. **A recommended rerouting of the trail to include these sites is noted in the section on Transportation and Signage.**

ROAD DESCRIPTION: HWY 67S – 2-lane curvy road up the mountain.
Scenic drive.

- **On the left side of the road there is the old Seaboard tipple.**
 - Pull off and interpretive sign or a note on coal trail information brochures and website.

Jewell Ridge – POTENTIAL TO BECOME PRIME STOP ALONG THE ROUTE

One of the crown jewels of the Coal Heritage Trail, the company office building, schools and numerous company homes.

- Possible visitor center or visitor kiosk at this site which includes a brochure and information specifically on Jewell Ridge.
- Interpretive signs in front of some of the buildings describing their prior use.
- Definitely historic photos of the community either on interpretive signs or in a building. What about the gas station becoming in information center/museum?

Buchanan County – Very scenic drive through the mountains but the current route bypasses a few of the more historic coal sites in Buchanan County and includes a few along route. ATV trails being developed on old coal and logging roads. **Recommendation:** Buchanan County needs to capitalize on the fact that they have numerous active coal mining sites along the route as well as mining sites no longer in operation but still nearly all intact. Also examples of reuse of reclamation sites once mining is complete. Excellent opportunities for interpretations of both the past and present in mining practices.

But taking the scenic route actually misses a few major historic coal sites within Buchanan County. **Recommendation:** Keep the state scenic route as it is but have an alternative route for the national byway nomination which takes the visitor past the significant historic sites. See Chapter VIII: Meeting in Grundy for more on this.

Action Taken: Sandy Stiltner has letters of support from the Buchanan Supervisors, Chamber and Tourism for keeping the original route through the county as scenic but establishing a different more historic route for the National byway route.

CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

Sites along the scenic route include:

- **Golf Course on reclaimed coal mine site and wonderful curvy scenic roads through the mountains plus a few houses which were once part of larger coal camps.**

Sites along the historic route include:

- **Two active mine sites**
- **Jewell & Coal Coke Company where one can view numerous coke ovens in operation.** Needs a pull-off area on Hwy 641 overlooking the site adding interpretive signs describing the process.
- **Island Creek Coal Mining site active years ago - nearly all intact.** Needs interpretive signs ideally located at bridge that crosses onto site.
- **Keen Mountain Coal Camp which is one of the most intact coal camps along the entire route which includes the old company store.** It is strongly recommended the Company Store become the visitor interpretive center for that portion of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail. The center would include displays featuring some of the coal camps that once existed in Buchanan County, the history of coal mining in the area and serve as a historical museum for the county. **(Immediate) Action Taken:** County is currently negotiating with People Inc. to acquire the building.
- **Information and a display on the Consol Energy's Central Appalachian Operations Mine Rescue Facility located on the Coal Heritage Trail between Keen Mountain Coal Camp and Jewell Ridge Smokeless Coke Ovens should also be provided at the Visitor Center.** **(Short-term) Action Taken:** Cathy St. Clair, public relations manager with CONSOL Energy is currently working on this (276)498-8239, cathyst.clair@consolenergy.com
- The concrete marker from the Red Jacket Disaster could be moved to Keen Mountain Coal Camp and the story told. **(Short-term) Who is working on this?**
- Cross over numerous railroad tracks and travel through a number of small communities now all but gone. The community of Whitewood (primarily the post office and a few homes remain)
- The Town of Vansant which offers a number of fast food restaurants, gas, car wash, grocery store and more. **There is an excellent pull-off area to view mining beside the car wash. Recommend this as a potential stop along the Coal Trail that could include interpretive signs. (Time frame?) Who does one need to contact to make this happen?**



Site from beside the carwash in Vansant which would be an excellent location for visitors to pull over and view coal mining activity.

- The Town of Grundy offers restaurants, lodging and a **memorial to miners**. Interesting story of moving the town which could also be included at the Keen Mountain Company Store or in one of the businesses in Grundy itself to become a stop along the route. **Suggested side trip to the top of mountain onto reclamation site now being developed for industry, parks, trails and more.**





CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN

Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken – Green**

- *Restaurants and hotels in Vansant and Grundy should include information and brochures on the coal heritage trail. They may also want to display historic photos of some of the mining towns or sites in the region which might encourage people to stop at their establishment.*
- **Other coal sites and stops along the route include the small loadout at Maxie and the Apollo Mine Operation near Harman.** These sites need to be noted along the route with signage as being part of the driving tour through Buchanan County and interpreted in a brochure and at the Keen Company Store. *(Short-term) Who wants to put together information for both these sites?*

ROAD DESCRIPTION: HWY 80 – 2-lane curvy road up the mountain.
Scenic drive.

Breaks Interstate Park

- This is a suggested site for overnight stays offering both restaurant and lodging accommodations.
- **State Park Visitor Center – Excellent display on coal.**
 - **Need coal heritage trail sign in front of visitor center noting information site. (IMMEDIATE - 1st year)**
 - **Need coal heritage trail display with map and brochures at this location.**
Action to take: Who needs to be contacted at the State Park to make this happen?
- **Domus Mine site overlook (See Chapter VIII – Haysi Meeting for more on this)**
 - **Need interpretive sign once one arrives at the site with historic photos of the mine as it once appeared when it was active.** *A site trail sign with photo can be used until funding becomes available to do a more in-depth and information interpretive wayside exhibit. (1st year) – Action to Take: Who will take this on as a project? Might be an excellent project for a class to take on.*
 - **Need at least 5 coal heritage trail signs directing visitors to the site.**
Need trail sign at entrance to park, confirmation sign as one comes further into the park, one just past the museum, one at the site and one directing visitors back to the byway with a stop at the Breaks Interstate Park Restaurant for a scenic overlook(see note below.)
(1st year) Action to take: Someone needs to step forward and take responsibility for working on both the interpretive sign and the better signage through the park
- Scenic overlook off the balcony of the State Park Restaurant – Definitely a must stop which needs to be noted in publications and website.

Leaving Breaks Interstate Park on Hwy 80 into Dickenson County

- Pull off with parking, tourism kiosk, interpretive sign for crooked road and information sign on Mill Overlook with trail leading down to photo op location overlooking the valley.
 - **Excellent location for information on the Coal Heritage trail. Kiosk could include brochures of the route. (1st year) – Who will take on this responsibility to add this information and to restock it periodically?**
- Garden Hole Day Use Picnic Area located ½ mile on the right needs to be noted as well.

Just past Cherokee Lane and the white church with the red roof, Dickenson County Coal Heritage Trail brochure notes:



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

- **“One can see an operating mine shaft”**. Need to determine if a coal heritage trail “Look” sign should be included at this site with information included in a brochure and/or website.

Haysi

- Offers a couple of restaurants, gas, a covered shelter overlooking the river for picnics or rest area. Ample parking at this site.
- **Splashdam Mine site and coal vein still visible.**
- This is where the route becomes very confusing.
 - **Better signage is needed to direct visitors through town and to the Splashdam site then redirect them back the way they came and to then turn to cross the bridge.** *Need at least 6 trail signs directing visitors through Haysi, to Splashdam site and back onto trail (Immediate)*
 - **Definitely need a pull-off at Splashdam with an interpretive sign that tells about the mine and the once thriving Splashdam Coal Camp that included a company store, church/school, barber shop, community center and more.** *(Short-term) A site trail sign with photo can be used until funding becomes available to do a more in-depth and information interpretive wayside exhibit.*
 - **Need a coal heritage sign directing people to pull off and park at the pavilion in downtown Haysi and add interpretive signs or tourism kiosk which tells more about Splashdam Mine and notes the location of Mine #6 which is visible along the trail, more on the community that once existed, and then directs people to Splashdam Mine.** *(Short-term)*
 - **This same site should also provide information on Haysi, the Flood of 1977, and note some of the businesses which have been here through it all along with information on the coal museum up ahead and Red Caboose B&B.** *(Short to mid term)*
 - **Local restaurants or one of the businesses could add historic photos and note this at the kiosk and on brochures which might encourage people to stop in.**

Please Note: *See Chapter VIII – Haysi Town Meeting for more on this.*

All of the above either needs immediate or short term action.

Who will be responsible for seeing this happens?

ROAD DESCRIPTION: HWY 83 – 2-lane road through small populated areas.

- **Coal Museum and Red Caboose B&B -** Need a sign either on the other side of the bridge letting people know there is a coal museum up ahead or at the turn off to the coal museum. This might also be an excellent location to provide some additional information and photos of Splashdam Mines and other mining sites in the area. **If so, this needs to be noted in the brochure, on the website and at both the Haysi Pavilion and at the Splashdam Mines site.**
Note: There was discussion at the Dickenson County Town Meeting in Haysi of the inevitable closing of both the Coal Museum and B&B in the near future and all artifacts sold. IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN TO INSURE THIS SITE REMAINS AND IS PROPERLY MARKETED.
- **Immediately past this is a coal haul entrance and weigh station.** A pull-off and interpretive sign at this location is suggested or possibly just a “Look” sign.



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN

Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken – Green**

Steinman Camp

- One mile before Clinchco was once the Steinman Coal Camp where they used a bucket line to bring coal down from the mountain, across the river to the tippie.
 - One of the strangest sights was when they sent a man down the line in one of the large coal buckets to periodically grease the cables.

Is there a site for a pull-off and interpretive sign that includes both the story and historic photos of the camp and the pulley system bucket line once used? Otherwise, recommend providing this information in Clinchco. See below.

Clinchco

- **Another “must stop” on the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail - There needs to be a coal heritage trail sign directing the visitor into Clinchco to:**
 - **Visit the coal memorial with a walking tour directing people to visit:**
 - **The old “Post Office” – Needs an interpretive sign letting the traveler know this is the one remaining coal company building which once served as a bank, barber shop, company offices, printing press, school rooms, mortuary and a post office.**
 - **And offer a viewing area of the beehive oven once used by Hungarians and Italians to make bread who came to Clinchco to work the mines noting the other two ovens buried nearby.**

An interpretive sign at either the memorial or at the old Post Office could provide photos and possibly a layout of Clinchco as it once looked as a coal camp.

This could also be the location for an interpretive sign on the Steinman Camp noting that it was once located a mile up the road.

Note: Sad loss – The closing of The Reedy Family Coal Museum in Clinchco - Now closed and all coal mining memorabilia and artifacts have recently been sold on EBAY as well as the old Clinchco post office which once housed the collection.

New Camp

- **Built in the early 20’s, New Camp community provides an excellent example of row houses. Once a railroad community with depot, many of the railroad workers homes still remain as does the depot agent’s home, all privately owned. Excellent location for a pull-off and a discussion on the important role of railroad to the coal stories and the towns that sprang up because of it. (Short-term) Who will be responsible for making this happen?**
- Just past this site on the left is a Railroad Tunnel. This too could have a special coal heritage trail site sign. (Short-term)
- On the right is a swinging bridge to someone’s home. Not being from an area that offers swinging bridges to cross rivers, we found this fascinating and would **encourage a pull off at this location along with an interpretive sign featuring some of the other swing bridges along the route and others within the region. Also note how many there once were with historic photos of some of the unique ones that have now all but disappeared.**



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN **Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail**

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

Site of Interest: Riverside Grocery Store

- Located just past New Camp. One of the first three stores in the Piggly Wiggly chain.
- Owned for three generations by the Molinary's, an Italian family who came to Virginia during the mining boom. **Recommend an interpretive sign providing photos of the original store and noting the location of the other two in Norton and Wise. Also include other historic photos of the other businesses that were once located nearby including two car dealerships, a hardware store, restaurant with pool hall in the basement and the 1st television store in the region. (Short –term) Who is following up on this?**

Site of Interest: Swinging Bridge

- Excellent example of a swinging bridge. Once there were hundreds along the route. Now this is one of just a few. **Recommend a pull-off and interpretive sign at this location telling about the swinging bridge and others one will see along the route. (Short – term) Who would like to take on this project?**

McClure

- The Binns-Counts Community Center (now the McClure River Valley Development Center) was opened in the 80's and considered neutral territory during the strikes of that era. Miners used it as their base in negotiations and talks. **Recommendation: This should be the site along the tour that interprets the strikes taking place during the 70's and 80's.**
- McClure Mine #1 exploded in the early 80's killing 10 people including the first woman miner to be killed in the mines. **This too should be interpreted at the site noted above. (Short to Mid-term)**
- Interpretive wayside exhibits need to be developed depicting the following:
 - The impact Deaconess Margaret Binns and her mission had on this region and how it led to the development and continued ministry of the McClure River Valley Community Development Center.
 - Remembrance of the McClure Mine #1 explosion and the seven miners who died including the first woman miner.
 - Information about the United Miners Worker's (UMWA) strikes in the late 1980's and how the Center served as a "neutral zone" during the UMWA strike against Pittston Corporation (Clinchfield Coal Company) in 1989-1990.
 - David Buchanan and Tena Willemsma (twill5141@aol.com) would both be two excellent people to interview about the strikes. Another person to interview is Reverend Don Prange (coramej@aol.com)
 - See Chapter VIII: McClure Meeting for more on area.



*Note: Ample space for both parking and interpretive signs on the north side parking area for the Center. **Action taken: Mary White manages the Center (276)-835-8779 and agreed to the location for the interpretive signs.** (Short-term) Who will be responsible for helping to make this happen?*



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN

Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

- Will also need Coal Site sign at this location to direct travelers to stop at the Binn-Count Community center and possibly at the location noted below:
- Rich logging history, McClure was the home to the Ritter Circle Lumber Supply Company. Other logging towns nearby included Haysi and Bartlick. **Recommend an interpretive sign outside the company building to tell the story of logging and what it meant to these communities and how, before the railroad, logs were cut and sent down the river to Elkhorn and Catlynburg.** *Contact Carl Rose on history of the lumber.*



Stratton

- Stratton Mining Camp was a mile past McClure but not much remains. **Interpretive sign or possibly just a coal sign noting the location of the Stratton Mining Camp and the years of its existence?**

Fremont

- **Fremont Community is another excellent example of a coal community with a number of company houses still visible from the road along with a Fremont Company sign or am I thinking of McClure? Need to find this out.** This might too have a coal heritage trail site sign added noting it as the Fremont Coal Camp with a history of the area provided in a brochure and/or on the website.
- Fremont Railroad Depot has now been converted into the PSA office. **A coal trail site sign needs to be included at this location. Isn't there already an interpretive sign on site?** Need to check on this.

ROAD DESCRIPTION: Rt. 63S – 2-lane road through small populated areas.

Trammel

- **The Trammel community is a must stop on the Coal Heritage Trail driving tour.** One misses too much just driving by. Trammel needs to have a pull-off with an interpretive sign pointing out the location of the remaining buildings such as the Coal Company Store, Superintendent's home and boarding house still stand as well as the company housing on both sides of the road now privately owned. *(Short-term)*
- **The Coal Company Store is probably one of the best examples still standing and in possible condition to be renovated.** Our recommendation would be to seek the funding to do so and use this site as a possible interpretive center/museum with lodging either next door or above to bring in some revenue. *Contact Charlotte Mullins who is spearheading efforts to save the community.*
- Trammel is also the site of the last spike laid on the Clinchfield Railroad in 1915. **A sign should note this.** *Contact Dennis Reedy for more on this.*

Dante

- **Definitely a primary stop on the Coal Heritage Trail Driving Tour. This is one of the crown jewels of the tour.** A sign encouraging people to turn onto Lower Bear Wallow Road should be erected along with a sign prior to this letting people know a turn is up ahead for the Coal Heritage Trail. *(Immediate)*



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN **Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail**

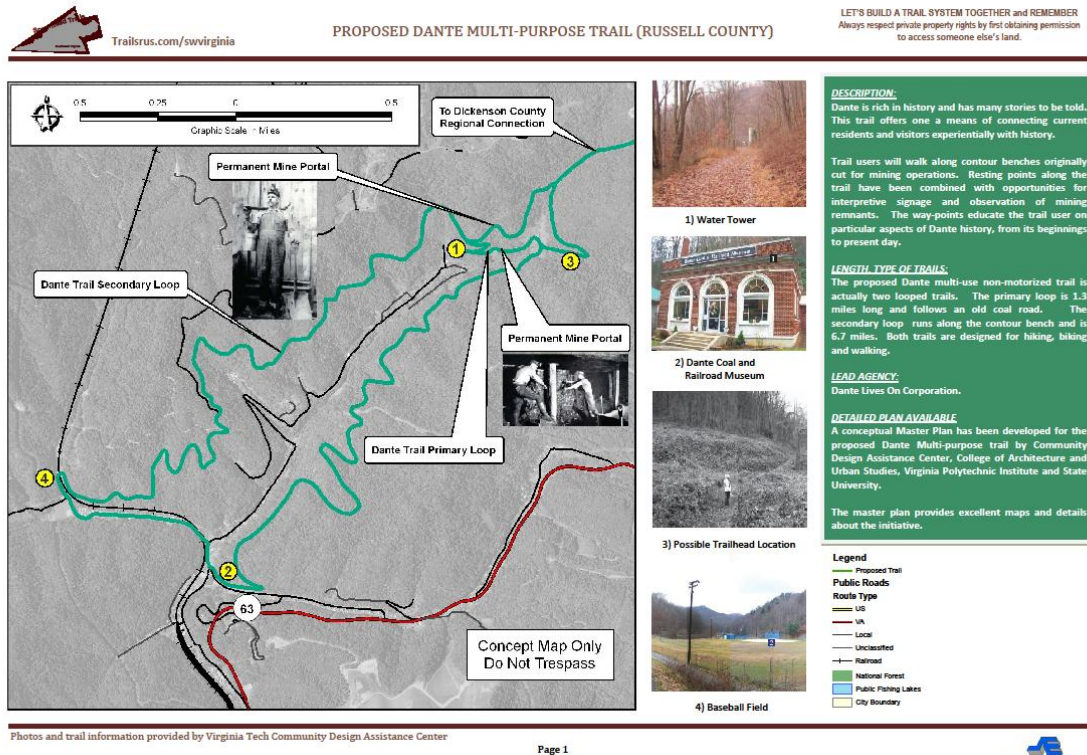
Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

- **Rich coal and railroad history, numerous buildings still remain.**
- **The Dante Coal & Railroad museum has been established in the old bank, ca. 1902 in the center of town and includes historic photos and a wonderful model of the entire coal camp as it once looked.** This museum should be more heavily promoted in publications marketing the coal heritage trail as a “must stop”. *(Immediate)*
- **The Dante Steam building is currently privately owned and used for storage.** Recommend working with the owners to either acquire it or to allow interpretive sign to be added to explain what it was originally. *(Short to mid-term)*
- **The Dante Depot is at risk of being taken down.** Action needs to be taken immediately to preserve this building. **IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN** – See website trailsrus.com for more on this.
- **Dante is an ideal location for a historic walking tour of coal community**
An interpreted walking tour is also recommended as well as a section of the museum including information about the rest of the coal trail.
Action Taken: *The walking tour brochure is currently being developed by those within the community. See Chapter VII: Walking & Driving Tours*
 - Debby Spencer (270)792-5300 spencerdebby@aol.com – WMTH Corp.
 - Larry Morefield (276)495-8099 tubm123@yahoo.com, Rick Hall, Others?
 - **Action Taken:** *A sign-up sheet has been distributed to determine others interested in working on this and the downtown walking tour.*
- **Dante is a “must stop” on the byway.** All brochures and the website for this portion of the route should encourage this.
- **There are also a number of coal camp homes that are now privately owned.** Issue to address: Some of the homes have absentee owners. Others, no one has paid property taxes for twenty years or more. This has resulted in a few of the homes becoming so dilapidated that they have become both an eyesore and health and safety issue. **Action needs to be taken immediately to either deed these houses over to the town to fix up or demolish.** *(Short-term)*
- **Dante Multipurpose Trail with a coal theme in the works.**
Through the assistance of Virginia Tech, plans have been developed for a hiking/horseback riding trail that takes one past a number of coal sites. The seven county Spearhead Trails initiative has it noted as one of the recommended trails to see developed. And this would be an excellent addition to the proposed walking trail through downtown Dante. *(Short-term)*
 - Larry Morefield (276)495-8099 tubm123@yahoo.com.
 - **Action Taken:** *A sign-up sheet has been distributed to determine others interested in working on this and the downtown walking tour as noted above.*



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Red - Coal-related site Blue – Road Description Purple – Recommendations Action Taken - Green



- **Exiting Dante, one finds the Dante Coal Miners Memorial which is very well marked and excellently displayed. Needs to be noted on brochure and website.**

Sun

- Before and in the community of Sun, there are a number of junkyards which definitely takes away from the trail. **This is the one place we would strongly recommend cleaning up before one invites people to take the coal trail.** It definitely reflects badly on the area. *(Immediate)*
Action Taken: Linda Tate is currently working with the County to have something done about this.

St. Paul

Note: See Chapter IX: Action Plan – St. Paul Loop. Also Chapter VIII: St. Paul Meeting and Chapter VII: Walking & Driving Tours for more on St. Paul.

- Serves as an oasis offering gas, food as well as lodging nearby and as the beginning and end of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail St. Paul Loop traveling through Russell, Scott and Wise before ending back at St. Paul. **This and amenities need to be noted on the website and/or brochure.**
- In 1998, with the help of the Nature Conservancy, a group of local residents established “St. Paul Tomorrow”. The group’s purpose is “to create a vision of the future for the town, both environmentally and economically, and lay out a clear plan on how to get there”. **Action needs to be taken to include the VA Coal Heritage Trail in their plan.**
- **Better directional signage is needed through community.**
(Short-term) Action Taken: St. Paul Tomorrow are working on this and an interpreted walking tour downtown. **Contact person: Sharon Steele**



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN **Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail**

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

- Currently in the works:
 1. Hillman House, oldest building in St. Paul is being renovated to become a welcome center for St. Paul, provide information on the history of the area and on the Heart of Appalachia Bike Trail. **Recommend this site also include information on the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail and what one can see and learn about both coal and railroad in St. Paul.**
 2. The Ice House (over 100 years old) is being renovated and will provide information on trails and other activities and offerings in the area. **Brochures and a map of the Coal Heritage Trail should be posted at this site.**
(Short-term) – Sharon Steele is the contact person
 3. The home of the railroad superintendent is being developed into a railroad museum and meeting space. **Parking needs to be addressed as well as hours of operation.**
- St. Paul has numerous historic buildings and a rich, very colorful history as a railroad community. **Strongly recommend a St. Paul Historic Walking/Driving Tour be developed for St. Paul which includes the Hillman House, the Ice House, the old theater, and one of the only remaining phone booth.**
(Short-term) **Action Taken:** *St. Paul Tomorrow are working on this and an interpreted walking tour downtown. Contact person: Sharon Steele*
- **A driving tour should be developed that includes a scenic drive through the mountains to Copper Ridge, Powell Valley and the cemetery with a side trip to the historic community of Castlewood (a church, historic lodging house, bank and post office and a colorful history of the Canty boys). (Mid-term)**
- Mayor Fletcher and Sharon Steele are the contacts on this. Others interested in working on this?
- The Oxbow Center is in a strategic location to serve as the byway information center for those beginning at the western end of the Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail System. It could also serve as the byway information center for those taking the St. Paul Loop. The facility has many features which make it ideal for this purpose:
 - Ample parking available for cars and buses,
 - A large lobby for tourism displays, information, maps, etc.,
 - It is handicapped accessible,
 - Has easy access restroom facilities,
 - And is very visible and easily accessible from Hwy 58A with signage visible from St. Paul and Hwy 58A
- **Recommend that the facility be used for this purpose.**



CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN

Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail

Red - Coal-related site **Blue – Road Description** **Purple – Recommendations** **Action Taken - Green**

RECOMMENDATION FOR SECTIONS OF THE POCAHONTAS TO ST. PAUL TRAIL OF THE VIRGINIA COAL HERITAGE TRAIL.

Portions of this trail are ideal for motorcyclists and sports car enthusiasts offering windy, curvy roads through the mountains of southwest Virginia. In particular the section from Breaks Interstate Park to St. Paul is ideal. Other sections of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail should also be considered for designation as Motorcycle Routes but avoid areas which have numerous railroad tracks crossing the roads because neither motorcyclists nor classic car owners enjoy crossing either of these if given the choice.

- Periodic safety signs should be added noting it as such and recommending other motorists watch out for motorcyclists.
- Both motorcycle and classic car rallies should be planned throughout the year and during special events.
- Develop a brochure specifically for motorcyclists that includes the entire route but notes those sections which are “motorcycle friendly” and note “must stop” and “don’t miss” locations on a map within the brochure.