





TENNESSEE

In the following section is an overview of the recommendations and plan for action for the St. Paul section of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail based on town meetings held in St. Paul, Gate City, Big Stone Gap, Norton and follow-up conversations with individuals in Duffield, Dungannon, and Fort Blackmore. 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. This section of the Byway may want to primarily focus on the railroad and how it enabled coal to be transferred out of the mountains and across the United States. For this reason, we have added a fourth category "railroad-related sites" noted in brown.



#### <u>ACTION PLAN</u> FOR THE ST. PAUL LOOP Through Russell, Wise, and a portion of Lee County

#### Red - Coal-related site Blue – Road Description Purple – Recommendations Action Taken - Green Brown - railroad-related sites

#### <u>St. Paul</u>

(Also see Chapter VII- Issues to address, Chapter IX: Recommendations: Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail and Appendix H - Meeting in St. Paul for more on St. Paul)

- First and foremost, develop a walking tour through downtown St. Paul highlighting all the historic sites downtown and sharing with visitors the rich and colorful history of St. Paul. See Chapter VII Walking Tours for more on this. (Short-Term) Who will take the responsibility?
- Recommend the entire community of St. Paul become more Visitor-Ready by adding benches, historic lighting, interpretive and directional signage to historic sites within the community and seriously consider putting utilities underground. See Chapter VII – Becoming Visitor Ready and Underground Utilities for more on both of these subjects. (Mid-term goals) Who will make this happen?
- Hillman House Wonderful historic home in the middle of St. Paul which offers ample parking and is strategically located in the heart of the downtown area next to the farmer's market. Immediate action for all below Who will make this happen?
  - This building needs to become the Historic St. Paul Welcome Center and the start of the St. Paul Historic Walking Tour. Historic photos need to be included on the walls inside including a small display of the renovation of the building in the past few years to its current glory.
  - Local artwork and periodic special collections can also be displayed on the walls and in some of the rooms of this building.
  - It needs to be the first stop on the walking tour and include an interpretive sign outside that shows where the home was located in the early 1900's, how it looked a few years ago and what it now looks like.
  - Excellent idea to use the upstairs for lodging for dignitaries, travel writers or special guests or tourists visiting the area.
- Railroad Section Superintendent's Home overlooks the tracks– This building is in excellent shape and is currently used for receptions and displaying art and railroad memorabilia. Short-term for all below Who will make this happen?
  - Encourage this site become a full-time railroad museum which is open more regular hours.
  - Need an interpretive sign outside this building providing information of the railroad and the original use of this building for those times when visitors come and the building is not open.
  - Need designated parking for those coming to the museum which is marked clearly.
  - Contact Kenny Fannon, Ron Flanery and Frank Kilgore to get historic photos and memorabilia for the museum.
  - Recommend converting the upstairs rooms into an apartment to rent out to generate revenue for the building or as lodging for the curator of the museum to reduce overall salary costs.
- 186 Corridor Management Plan for Virginia Coal Heritage Trail WMTH Corporation, 2011, trailsrus.com

CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN For St. Paul Loop

- This home needs to be included on the St. Paul Walking Tour and the deadend where it is located needs to be cleaned up a bit more so as one looks up the street, they are enticed to come further. A numbered walking tour sign needs to be added.
- Note buildings in St. Paul used during the days of passenger trains such as the Stonebriar *building*, once a popular hotel called the Blue Sulphur used by many who came in on the trains.
  - Many of these buildings that still remain need to be included on the St. Paul Walking Tour.
  - Need interpretive signs showing the railroad town which once existed along the tracks in the "Western Front". Designated areas need to be determined for placement of interpretive signs. One interpretive sign could definitely be placed in front of the rail car displayed between the park and the Oxbow Center.

ACTION TAKEN: Oxbow Center Tourism will be responsible for an interpretive sign at the Oxbow highlighting the Western "Front"

- The Oxbow Center could also have interpretive information specifically on the Western Front due to its proximity in the heart of that area.





 Walk up to view tracks with beautiful views overlooking the birding & nature area being developed



Include Stonebriar on the walking trail as an old railroad hotel now converted for other use.

- As crazy as it sounds, the telephone booth downtown is something one no longer sees. It in itself is an attraction and should be preserved and information provided.
- Recommend a sign noting St. Paul as the start of the St. Paul Coal Heritage Trail Loop and one end of the Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail. (Short-term)
- It is recommended that there needs to be a Coal Heritage Trail Visitor Center in the area since this is both the start of the St. Paul Loop of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail and the western end of the Pocahontas Trail. The Visitor Center would include information and maps on the byway, displays of sites one will see along both the St. Paul Loop and the Pocahontas Trail as well as brochures and historical information.
  - It has been recommended that a portion of the Oxbow Center be used for this purpose due to its strategic location at the , easy access, handicapped accessibility of both the facility and the restroom, ample parking for buses, cars and recreational vehicles.

<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>: Oxbow Center Tourism will be responsible for establishing Oxbow Center as a Coal Heritage Trail Visitor Center. The Heart of Appalachia is currently formulating a plan to utilize both the Oxbow Center and the Hillman House as information centers.

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- Coming soon:
  - Bike, kayak, canoe rental shop
    - Recommend using the old 1950's era service station as a place to pick up maps, trail brochures and information and to rent bikes, canoes and kayaks. *Work with Spearhead Trails initiative to promote these trail offerings.* Time frame? Who will be responsible for making this happen?
  - Renovation of the Ice House, a historic building over 100 years old.
    - Recommend it become part of the walking tour and include interpretive signage outside the building. Lighting could be added to the interior and historic photos or memorabilia of when it was a ice house could be displayed. Time frame? Who will be responsible for making this happen?

**ROAD DESCRIPTION:** 58A – Very commercial with numerous billboards and commercial businesses on both sides of the road.

• Suggestion to add sign noting this is where the *"coalfields meet the bluegrass"* at the corner of Hwy 58A just east of St. Paul. There are 3 acres available and the potential to add a tourism kiosk. See *VIII – Meeting in St. Paul – Short-term –* <u>ACTION TAKEN:</u> Mayor Kyle Fletcher of St. Paul is working on this.

Castlewood

- Noted as home of Daniel Boone from 1773 1775
- Restaurants, Gas and Lodging offered. Ma & Pa's Drive Inn Diner noted as an icon by those in the area.
- Recommend including historic information on the Town of Castlewood as a display at the Hillman House or Oxbow Center in St. Paul. Responsible party?

**ROAD DESCRIPTION:** Turn right onto Rt 65 – Mew Road – Two lane, windy road into rich agriculture lands.

- Coal Heritage byway signage is needed prior to the traffic light to let travelers know they need to turn right at the light. *(Immediate)* <u>ACTION TAKEN</u>: Dawn Jessee is currently working with VDOT on this.
- A byway confirmation sign is needed right after the turn (or the existing one moved a bit closer to the intersection. One must currently go a mile or so before seeing one). *(Immediate)* <u>ACTION TAKEN</u>: Dawn Jessee is currently working with VDOT on this.
- Bricks Baptist Church, circa 1873, log house and Old Union Hall building are all in close proximity to each other.

Recommendation: There is an excellent location in front of the old Union Hall for interpretive information about this building and activities at the time it was used, the historical significance of the log building behind it as well as information on the Red Brick Church, est. 1892 and interpretive information and map of the coal heritage trail and sites one will see along the St. Paul loop. (Short-term)

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Action: Steve Banner owns the property and should be contacted to determine his interest in this. (Immediate) <u>ACTION TAKEN</u>: Dawn Jessee has followed up with Steve Banner who has agreed to all of the above.

• Moore's Fort Historical Marker and a brief story of Daniel Boone's presence in the area and how he oversaw Moore's Fort, Fort Blackwood and Cowan's Fort in the area before moving on three years later. *Note: The current location of the Moore's Fort Historical marker is at the edge of a trailer park.* 

Recommendation: Relocate the historical marker to the proposed pull-off area in front of the "Union Hall" building. (Short-term)

Action: Once again, check with Steve Banner then seek approval from the state Historical Society to have it moved to a safer, much more visible location for one to actually pull off the road, get out of their car and read the message on the sign. <u>ACTION TAKEN</u>: Dawn Jessee has followed up on this and received permission from Steve Banner – Need to now follow up with state Historical Society to let them know it needs to be moved and the justification for doing so.

Entering Scott County which is primarily lush farmland.

- Historic Brick home on the right. History?
- Junky area on the right takes away from the scenic farmlands. Might need to address this with the owners.
- Chestnut Ridge Farm Unique signs
- Dungannon River access

Dungannon

- Railroad depot converted to Town Hall
- Historic marker on Patrick Porter
- Side trip to Hanging Rock and 24 foot Falls of the Little Stoney.
- St. Patrick Catholic Church in Log structure Recommendations:
  - Interpretive sign on the Depot as well as Church and other buildings still existing and those that once existed. Interpretive signs are needed otherwise people will have no reason to stop and will miss this small community's rich railroad history and the stories of times past. (Short-term) Who will be responsible for making this happen?
  - An interpretive sign also needs to be erected providing the history of the Santa Train and that the tradition continues through today. (Short to Mid-term) Who will be responsible for this?
  - Need pull-off and interpretive sign talking about the Flanary Historical site, the Osborne Ford log house and about the remains found of an 8000 BC Indian Village. *For more on this, go to Chapter VIII – St. Paul Meeting* Responsible party to make this happen – Betty Flanary Salyers?

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- Develop a historic walking tour in Dungannon that includes the sites above (Short to Mid term) Responsible party to make this happen Betty Flanary Salyers?
- One of the remaining historic buildings could be converted into a sandwich shop & novelty store which could also include historical information about this rail town in its heyday, about the Coal Heritage Trail, and what one will see as they travel along this portion of the byway. *(Long-term)* Who will follow up on this?

Community of Slant

• Old store and swinging bridge still exist. There used to be many swinging bridges located throughout the region. Now there are very few. Efforts need to be made to preserve those that still remain.

Recommendation: An interpretive sign at this location providing information about this particular swinging bridge and photos and approximate location of the others found along the route is recommended. Who wants to take this on?

Stanleytown

• Actually off the byway but was once the site of a mine near Coke Creek. It also provides access to Jefferson National Forest.

Should there be an interpretive sign about Stanleytown and the mine since this is one of very few mines located along the St. Paul loop of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail? Does anyone have the history of this community or the mine?

Turn off to Rikemo Lodge, a once very popular lodge which drew many people to stay in the area.

• Darris and Barbara Hillman now the history. Currently owned and being renovated by Pat McCann and his wife.

Recommendation: There needs to be more historical information about this lodge, possibly on an interpretive sign at the turnoff to the site. Responsible party to follow up on this? If indeed it is going to be open to the public, then this information needs to be included on brochures, website and other marketing materials.

Scott County Horse Park

- Connects with Forest Service horse trails. Numerous horse shows held. Building campground on property. The Horse Park is adding 10 RV camp sites which are greatly needed along the byway. Camping opportunities are currently limited along the byway. Include this in listing of lodging along the byway. Who will make sure this happens?
- Next door is the new Clinch River Health Center and across the street is a vacant industrial building. Any plans for this building?

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- Site: Bart Osborne Store Building Railroad follows road. Used to be known as the raceway. Significance of this site? Worth noting and providing an interpretive sign?
- Site: Hagan Hall Mansion,
  - Circa 1860 and built by Patrick Hagan (actually located off byway on Castle Chapel Rd) For more on mansion, Patrick Hagan and his impact on the area, see Chapter VII -Series of Town Meetings: Scott County.

Recommend interpretive sign on Byway and include information and photo of the Rufus Ayers mansion as well. (Short to mid-term) Who wants to take this on as their project?

Site: Wood Riverview Church

Recreation: Vann's Farm – Stocked Fishing

<u>Worthwhile Side Trip Attraction</u>: Unique attraction and lodging opportunity just 15 miles South – Creation Kingdom Zoo where one can see 37 species and adding more will soon be offering tree houses for travelers to spend the night. *See VIII – Scott County meeting for more on this amazing side trip.* 

• Recommendation: This unique attraction and lodging opportunity should be included in publications and on the website.

# Road Description: Curvy two lane road.

Unique murals and quirky art at barn on right worth noting add fun and whimsy along the byway.

Fort Blackmore

- Farmer's Market and Fort Blackmore United Methodist Church is about all that remains of a once thriving community that was destroyed in the 1977 floods. Historic marker or interpretive sign?
- Daniel Boone once oversaw Fort Blackmore in 1773 1775 as well as other forts in the area. Historic marker?

Front Porch Grocery & Restaurant for gas and food.

- Has photos and class rosters of Blackmore children throughout the years line the walls
- Music played periodically
- Good food Known for their burgers

Recommend asking owners to allow this to be a Byway information site on the coal trail and add information about Fort Blackmore and the Blackmore Community prior to the 1977 flood on interpretive signs in their side yard as well as a map of the Byway route and what one might see along this section *(Short-term)* Who will follow up on this?

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Rye Cove

- Turn off for Rye Cove Community where a tornado took out the school years ago and killed both children and a teacher on May 2 1929. Top 10 worst school disaster.
- Takes one past the Rye Cove School and memorial to this tragic event and the role the railroad played.
- The Country Basket provides a stop for gas and food.

Recommend an interpretive sign at the turnoff to Rye Cove school that tells the story of this tragic event and how the railroad took many of the children to the hospital in Bristol on flatbeds and rail cars. Include a photo of the memorial. (short to mid-term) Who wants to follow up on this?

Clinchport

- Railroad community that once flourished until a fire then a flood destroyed it. Very little still remains.
- It was also the town with the youngest mayor ever elected. He was just 18 years old and made it on David Letterman Show.

Recommendation: There needs to be a pull-off area from the byway which includes a marker or interpretive sign designating the location of this once thriving community and telling about the flood of 1977 and the fire prior to this as well as other interesting tidbits such as a note about the mayor. <u>ACTION TAKEN</u>: <u>Kathie</u> <u>Noe has photos and is following up on this.</u>

• Clinchport River access – Well marked. Swinging bridge at river's access.

Recommendation: Add byway signage directing travelers to take the ¼ mile scenic loop off Hwy 65 along Bridge Road which takes one right past the swinging bridge then back onto Hwy 65. Need an interpretive sign about this bridge as well as showcasing the few remaining ones along the route. Efforts need to be made to preserve the swinging bridges still in existence along the byway and within the seven county area. Short-term – Who will take on this project?

Turn right onto Hwy 23N – Need byway sign noting turn up ahead or one may miss this. Immediate - Who wants to follow up to add this byway sign and periodically check all signs along the route to make sure all are in place and in good condition?

Worthwhile Side Trip: Interpreted Pull-Off at Fincastle Turnpike if one turns left on Hwy 23N







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CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN For St. Paul Loop

Recommend a spur be added encouraging a site trip to interpreted pull-off which provides an excellent view of the Trestle and interpretive information about the trestle, Speers Ferry as well as the Crooked Road Music Trail. Who will follow up on this?

There is also a Norfolk & Western Caboose on site and two other interpretive signs talking about the Natural Tunnel in regards to both the railroad and current recreation offerings. *To get back to byway, one can turn at Clinch River Market or Speers Ferry.* 

- Follow up with Tina who would know the route to recommend.

**ROAD DESCRIPTION:** Hwy 23 N– 4-lane divided highway with grass median. Quite scenic.

• Turn off for Natural Tunnel State Park – Potential site to include brochure and map of Coal Trail route and sites one will see along the way and the value of the rail for transporting both coal and passengers as well as supplies to the many coal camps.

Need to follow up with Superintendent *(Short-term)* Action Already Taken – Superintendent has expressed interest in this. Who will

be responsible for working with him to develop an information area on site on the Coal Heritage Trail.

- Enroute to Natural Tunnel State Park one passes by Redstone Drive Inn which serves excellent food. *Train stops for lunch and railroad crew jump off, grab lunch then board back on and head on down the track.*
- Carter's Fort Historic Marker Note: Nice warning signs of upcoming historic marker 500 feet ahead.

Duffield

- **Duffield Depot** houses an amazing collection of railroad artifacts and memorabilia. The nearby caboose and an enclosed carport houses more of the collection and additional pieces have been farmed out to other museums and individuals. Kenny Fannon is the curator of this collection and readily shows it to any and all who would like to see it.
  - The Duffield Depot needs to be considered a major stop along the route and included in all publications as a "must stop".
  - Need to consider a pull-off so someone can stop and take a photo.
  - Also need an interpretive sign telling the history of the depot and that it was used in the movie "Coal Miner's Daughter".
  - The original Duffield Depot is currently privately owned and being used as a storage shed.

**IMMEDIATE** ACTION: The old Duffield Depot needs to be moved to this site to further interpret the story and house some of the extensive railroad collection. Debby Spencer, Kenny Fannon are working on this. Other interested parties please contact either one. Contact information on both is in Appendix H.

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- Rest stop area at the same intersection on the right.
  - Includes monument denoting this as the Daniel Boone Trail
  - Interpretive sign on the Crooked Road Trail and Duffield itself
  - Picnic tables This would be an excellent location to provide some interpretive information about the Coal Heritage Trail. (*Mid-term*) Who will make this happen?
- Water towers on the left noting the Duffield Industrial Park and Crooked Road Music Trail Well done!
- Need a sign denoting Duffield as the smallest incorporated community in the state of Virginia. (Mid-term) Who wants to follow up on this?

# **ROAD DESCRIPTION:** Hwy 23N/58A– 4-lane divided highway with grass median. Quite scenic.

Near the Lee County Line:

• Historic marker about Daniel Boone's son enroute from Castlewood to Cumberland Gap to join father was killed by Chief Benge.

Enter Lee County for 4.8 miles then cross into Wise County.

- Historic marker on the right about Donelson's Indian Line
- Scenic Vistas Wide shoulders allow people to pull over and take photos.
- Turn off to Big Stone Gap community from 58A Worthwhile stop. Home of Harry W. Meador Coal Museum, "Trail of the Lonesome Pines" Outdoor Drama and Southwest Virginia Museum which both offer excellent coal displays and information on the history of coal in the area.
  - Signs denote these offering but may need to add a "Coal Heritage Trail" logo to each of the existing signs to let travelers know these are noted stops along the route.
- Big Stone Gap also offers the longest playing outdoor drama in the Commonwealth of Virginia *"The Trail of the Lonesome Pines"* based on a book written by John Fox Jr. depicting the *"effect that the discovery of coal in the Appalachian Mountains had on its people"*.
- A monument dedicated to coal miners sits in the courtyard of the courthouse.
- Scenic overlook Well done! Ample parking, handicapped accessible ramp to photo op area, tourism kiosk, benches and trash cans.
  - Need to be sure information about the Coal Heritage Trail is included at this kiosk including a map of the routes in particularly the Norton Loop and the St. Paul Loop since both go past this overlook. Who will be sure this gets done and will check periodically to make sure it is kept stocked up with brochures?
- OPTIONS for those following the byway: Turn off to the City of Norton Downtown Area and the start of the Norton Loop of the Coal Heritage Trail. The St. Paul Loop turns right onto 58 Alternate towards Tacoma.

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# **ROAD DESCRIPTION:** Turning right onto 58A headed east, a 4-lane road with wide shoulders and grass median.

#### Norton

- Restaurants, Gas, Shopping and Lodging at Norton
- On right side of the road is a rest area with picnic tables and a display on the Crooked Road Music Trail and history of Norton. Need to add interpretive information and map on the Coal Heritage Trail showing all three trails but emphasizing both the St. Paul Loop and the Norton Loop which can both be accessed from this point. (Short-term) Who will be responsible for making this happen?
- Blue coal conveyor over road? What is this used for? Someone mentioned coal waste. Needs to be interpreted somewhere with examples of others one might see along the route. Possibly at either Tacoma or at the wayside exhibit area noted above. Who will be responsible for this? Time frame?

#### Tacoma

- Railroad community surrounded by track.
- Tipple is visible from the road. There is supposedly a second older tipple within the community itself. Potential to turn off for interpretive information within Tacoma.
- The Tacoma school is on the National Register of Historic Places. It too needs to be interpreted as does the fact that this community is surrounded by railroad tracks and its rich history of coal and rail.
- Tacoma is a stop noted on the Crooked Road Music Trail.
  Action to Take: Someone needs to follow up with Robbie Robbins on both the history and to determine who will help develop the interpretive signs and possible pull-off area in Tacoma.

# Coeburn

(See Chapter VIII – Meeting in St. Paul and follow up tour of Coeburn – for more on Coeburn)

- Turn off onto Hwy 72 to loop through the historic Town of Coeburn and onto Tom's Creek Coal Camp.
- Home of Jim & Jesse and Ralph Stanley II, Coeburn offers restaurants, shopping and gas opportunities. Two lodges nearby.
- Incorporated in 1894. Many historic buildings, monuments, arched bridges.
- Fountain, large clock, underground electrical wires and displays of flowers all make for a very welcoming downtown area.
- Also the location of the historic Lay's Hardware offering music every weekend.
- Outdoor stage, bleachers and concessions are just north of the depot with ample parking.
- Coeburn Depot has been converted into offices and meeting rooms.
- Old NW Caboose is located at the nearby park.
- Old Dominion Power Company historic sign on one of the buildings.

Recommendation: Coeburn is a worthwhile stop on the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail and should be included on all future maps of the route and signs added extending the byway into Coeburn.

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(Immediate) – Debby Spencer send information to Loretta Mays, Coeburn's Town Manager, with examples of action taken by Buchanan County of what the town needs to do to "make it happen". – Action Taken - Examples sent to Coeburn 11-6-10

Tom's Creek

• Tom's Creek Coal Camp had one of the largest, most modern company stores, built in 1911 which included a butcher shop, a dry goods store, groceries, and a furniture department. The store also offered delivery service first by horse and wagon, later by truck. The camp had a hospital, theater, post office, machine shop, electric shop, supply house, a large boarding house and a large stable plus hundreds of homes. It was also noted as having the longest row of coke ovens. All that remains now is the depot and another brick building (might have been the freight depot) which are overshadowed by a very active coal operation.

(See Chapter VI: Unique Features - Coal Camps and Chapter VIII- Meeting in St. Paul for more on Tom's Creek)

Recommendation: The Coal Trail needs to be extended to Tom's Creek, once one of the largest coal camps and cultural center for the region. The historic coal town and mining practices along with modern practices in coal extraction could be interpreted very well at this site.

Immediate – Ask Loretta Mays to include Tom's Creek in Coeburn's request to expand the byway. Need someone to take on the responsibility of developing an interpretive sign at Tom's Creek which should emphasize that this community was once a cultural center for many of the surrounding coal camps as well as the amazing number of coke ovens which once were visible along the road.

- <u>Action Taken - Request Examples sent to Coeburn 11-6-10</u>

Virginia City

- Virginia City Presbyterian Church circa 1895 visible from road.
- Major Dominion Coal Energy initiative taking place. Possibility for pull-off near the church were interpretive information can be shared about the energy initiative. Recommendation: Provide an interpretive sign on the history of the church, its numerous moves, and that it now stands where it once did. Also provide a story of Dominion Coal Energy, the development they are constructing, the technology being used and its current impact (jobs created) and future impact (energy it will provide). Excellent opportunity to tell about the past, the present and the future. Short-term – Who wants to be responsible for making this happen?
- Gas station and convenient store.

Return to St. Paul and the start of the Pocahontas Trail.

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