

Upper Cheat River Water Trail

Application for Designation

Submitted to WV Department of Transportation

DECEMBER 10, 2012

Draft Designation submitted to WVRTAB Chair for approval and assistance: August, 2012.



* Phone: 304/329-3621 * Fax: 304/329-3622 * Email: foc@cheat.org * www.cheat.org

119 South Price Street, Suite 206 * Kingwood, WV 26537

Contents

Vision

What is a Water Trail?

Primary Sponsor

Committee Members and Partnering Organizations

FOC Cheat River Water Trail Committee Members

Recreational, Scenic, Historical, and Educational Opportunities

Basic Principles

The Upper Cheat River

Historic Sites and Points of Interest

Public Access

Maintenance

Trail Map, Informative Materials, and Signage

Figure 1: Draft Map

The Planning Process: Public Outreach and Local Government

Web-based Marketing

Figure 2: CRWT website

Informal Meetings

Local Government

Public Meetings

Presentation to Tucker County Commission

Parsons Town Hall Meeting Notes

Rowlesburg Town Hall Meeting Notes

Printed Materials

Appendix

A. Example Access Site Assessment

B. Access Site Summary Spreadsheet

Vision

The vision of Friends of the Cheat's Cheat River Water Trail Committee is to establish recreational water trails for non-motorized boaters in the Cheat River watershed. The group's first focus is the Upper Cheat River Water Trail (UCRWT), a 40-mile recreational water trail between the towns of Hendricks and Rowlesburg, West Virginia.

What is a Water Trail?

In short, a water trail is a trail for boats. It is a network of access points, resting places and attractions for users of human powered craft on lakes and rivers. Sometimes referred to as a "schoolhouse without walls," water trails engage the recreational paddler and the general public in land preservation and promote stewardship. Water trails offer an opportunity for people to personally explore our natural and cultural heritage from a distinctly unique perspective – sitting on the water.

Water trails bring the user into contact with the whole ecology of the trail corridor, and in the process the user learns and grows physically, mentally and emotionally; while the community grows in spirit, economic health and vitality.

Water trails continue an important traditional mode of travel that has been practiced for thousands of years, first by Native Americans, then by the explorers and traders who followed, and now by people who wish to discover the joy and adventure of paddling.

Water Trail Designations

In April 2010, President Obama announced America's Great Outdoors Initiative, which includes a focus on restoring the nation's rivers and expanding access to outdoor recreational activities in and around rivers. Then in February 2012, Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, established the National Water Trails System (NWTS) as a class of National Recreational Trails (NRT) under the National Trails System Act of 1968. The designation acknowledges not only the recreational values of the trails but also the excellent stewardship of the state, local communities and other partners who maintain their natural beauty and integrity. In the near future, Friends of the Cheat intends to apply for the national designations as an NRT and NWTS

The State of West Virginia has a separate designation process for water trails, which opens up Department of Transportation/Division of Highways funding opportunities for projects on designated water trails, via the FHWA-funded Recreational Trails grants.

This document is an application to the WV Department of Transportation's Recreational Trails Advisory Board, to consider designating the Upper Cheat River Water Trail as part of the West Virginia system of water trails.

The primary sponsor of the Cheat River Water Trail is Friends of the Cheat, Inc.

Friends of the Cheat, Inc. (FOC) is a 501(c)3 watershed group that formed in 1995 to address the severe acid mine drainage impairing twenty miles of the lower Cheat River main stem and seven of its major tributaries. Now entering its 19th year of existence, FOC has been a catalyst for millions of dollars of study, research, and remediation activities in the watershed. In addition, FOC has broadened its focus to include the development of hiking and biking trails on abandoned railroad corridors, redeveloping brownfields sites, and creating a Nature Learning Center on the banks of the Cheat River. FOC continues its commitment to the creation of recreational and sustainable economic opportunities within the watershed by fully supporting a state-designated water trail on the upper Cheat River.

All applications for grant funding for the trail or its amenities submitted to the WV Recreational Trail Advisory Board will be approved by Friends of the Cheat. Friends of the Cheat and its official Cheat River Water Trail Committee assumes responsibility for coordinating maintenance and upkeep of public access points, trailside amenities, signage, maps, guides, or website developed with grant funds awarded by WV Recreational Trail Advisory Board, or the WV Recreational Trails Program.

Committee Members and Partnering Organizations

Partnering organizations, their representatives, and other stakeholders of the FOC Cheat River Water Trail Committee are active in sponsoring, developing, maintaining, and managing the trail. Cheat River Water Trail meetings are open to the public and new participants are encouraged to attend. The FOC Cheat River Water Trail Committee has invited non-profit, service, community groups, individuals, and local government agencies to participate as co-sponsors (See Public Outreach section below). The Cheat River Water Trail Committee is very diverse. To date members include representatives from the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, Kingwood Veterans of Foreign Wars, Blackwater Outdoor Adventures, representatives of both the cities of Rowlesburg and Parsons, and the sponsoring organization, Friends of The Cheat.

The Committee has obtained signed Resolutions of Support from the Preston County Commission and the Tucker County Commission (See attachments below).

FOC Cheat River Water Trail Committee Members

Dave Cassell, riparian landowner and Chairman, Cheat River Water Trail Committee

Frank Jernejcic, Fisheries Biologist, WV Department of Natural Resources

Peggy Pings, Outdoor Recreation Planner, National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

Amanda Pitzer, Executive Director, Friends of the Cheat

Jim Snyder, business owner and world-renowned paddler, former Board member of Friends of the Cheat

Barry Pally, Region VI Planning and Development Council Board Member, Chair-Mon River Recreation and Commerce Committee, Upper Mon River Association Board Member, WV/PA Watersheds Compact Co-Chair, business owner, paddler, and fisherman

Bill Newlon, riparian landowner, paddler, and fisherman

Dave Brisell, health care consultant and paddler

Janet Preston, Parsons-based lawyer and wife and mother of paddlers

Ron Cunningham, proprietor of local river business—Cheat River Trout Trips and Post Commander of Kingwood VFW

Patrick McCann, operator of St. George-based outfitter, Blackwater Outdoor Adventures

Devra Deems, riparian landowner, paddler, Preston Rail-Trail Committee member, Friends of the Cheat volunteer stream monitor, and retired school teacher

Kevin Ryan, Project Manager, Friends of the Cheat, paddler, kayaking instructor/guide

Tim Weaver, Commissioner of Tourism and Economic Development, Town of Rowlesburg

Crystal Dean, President, Rowlesburg Revitalization Committee

David Manthos, Communications and Outreach Director, Skytruth.org

Aubrey Harris, OSM/VISTA, Friends of the Cheat

Recreational, Scenic, Historical, and Educational Opportunities

Basic Principles

Appreciation – West Virginia’s residents and guests who use water trails share a deep appreciation for the beauty of our lakes, rivers, streams, riversides, and wetlands, as well as the communities that thrive there. Either from on the water or shore, water trails put people in touch with their emotions regarding natural resources.

Community Vitality – A water trail is part of a network of recreational opportunities, museums, historic sites, and connected parks which create frontiers for exploration and enrichment. The connections build a sense of pride of place and bind citizens in a love for their community. The water trail community also encourages environmental stewardship, helping to prevent damage to the environment and preserving the natural integrity of the trail and its watershed.

Diversity – Water trails are open to people of all ages and abilities. Tolerance and understanding are fostered through shared work and play.

Local Economics – Water trails as recreational destinations generate income for local businesses including outdoor outfitters, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, campgrounds, grocery stores, gas stations and shops.

The Upper Cheat River

The Upper Cheat River is a contiguous waterway that is well-suited for recreational use by a variety of paddlers and boaters. The segment proposed for designation is Class I-II, family friendly, and suitable for beginners. Its beauty and other notable qualities make it very popular for people with all levels of experience and varied interests. Modern boats such as canoes, kayaks, and rafts can easily navigate the river as long as appropriate water level guidelines are observed. The river is wide and rarely over 8 feet in depth. The river is primarily flat in character with the occasional shoals or rapids. No rapid or riffle drops more than 2 feet in a single stretch of river. The river often contains a gentle moving current; however, there are over 12 pools that are ½ - 1 mile in length where current is slowed. Obstacles include curves in the river, bridge structures, and fallen trees, although, fallen trees are typically near the shore and not in the way of the common floating paths. The entire stretch is navigable and there are no current plans for constructing portage trails around major obstacles.

Historic Sites and Points of Interest

Monongahela National Forest Established in 1920, the 900,000 acre forest straddles the highest ridges in the State. Variations in terrain and precipitation have created one of the most ecologically diverse National Forests in the country.

Seneca Trail	Also known as the Warrior's Path, Rte. 219 was the Native American's highway from New York to the south.
City of Parsons	Dining, shopping, and lodging options.
Allegheny Highlands Rail-Trail	Accessed in both Hendricks and Parsons, this level rail-trail is good for biking and walking. It runs from Elkins to Hendricks, about 25 miles.
Miner Massacre Historic Site	Site of 1871 massacre where John Miner and his son, Jonathan, were among those killed.
St. George	Historic town (1776) and academy from whence the County Records were stolen in a successful attempt to move the county seat to Parsons in 1893. Changed sides 10 times during the Civil War.
Blackwater Outdoor Adventures	Located on the river's edge in St. George, within the Mon National Forest boundary, BOA provides guided paddling trips and a River Outpost and General Store to supply fishing, camping, whitewater, tubing and canoeing needs.
Old Rt. 50 Bridge Abutments.	Rt. 50 was an old buffalo trail and Indian Path before becoming a popular east/west route.
Allegheny Trail	A 310-mile north-south hiking trail whose northern terminus is on the Mason- Dixon Line at the Pennsylvania-West Virginia border near Bruceton Mills. It wends its way south until it meets the Appalachian Trail on Peters Mountain at the Virginia-West Virginia border.
Railroad Bridge	Site of a Civil War battle and also where George Washington identified (predicted) the easiest grade between the Potomac and Ohio watersheds.
Cannon Hill	Site of cannon emplacements used for the defense of Rowlesburg and its railroad bridge in the Civil War.
Tray Run Viaduct	Built in 1852 and a focus of the Confederate Jones - Imboden Raid of the Civil War. Considered an engineering marvel of the times and was included on the back of the West Virginia state seal (0.6 mi. North of Rowlesburg).
WWII Musuem	Housed at the Szilagyi Center for the Visual and Performing Arts in Rowlesburg.
Rowlesburg Park	Public park with playground equipment, restrooms, pavilions, parking, and river access. Home to the annual Rowlesburg Ox Roast, WV Chestnut Festival, and Arts on the River Festival.

Public Access

The FOC Cheat River Water Trail Committee has evaluated access points using an Access Inventory Checklist (Appendix A). These sites have been presented to the public and were chosen to ensure that sufficient public access is available. Each site has parking and at least one launch area (see a recent version of a full Access Site Summary in Appendix B). Future maps and brochures will provide parking information for each access site. No portage trails connecting access points currently exist and there are no plans to construct them. FOC is executing lease agreements for public access points sited on private property. The agreements include a formal commitment by Friends of the Cheat to maintain the sites. Other public access sites are already maintained by WV DNR. The selection and placement of public access sites have been coordinated by WV DNR partners and by volunteer landowners.

The proposed Upper Cheat River Water Trail travels through both Tucker and Preston Counties in northern West Virginia. The proposed trail begins upstream of Parsons in two separate locations. One starting location is on the Black Fork of the Cheat 3.19 miles above the confluence with the Shavers Fork of the Cheat. The second starting location is on the Shavers Fork 1 mile above the confluence with the Black Fork of the Cheat. The Cheat River is formed by the Black Fork and Shavers Fork Rivers just below the city of Parsons, WV. These two access points are popular for paddlers floating the upper Cheat River. Below these starting points, there two other access points, one on the Shavers Fork and one on the Black Fork. Seven access points have been identified along the Cheat River between the cities of Parsons and Rowlesburg, WV (Figure 1).

Most identified access sites require little preparation aside from clearing brush, branches, or other obstacles. Currently, three sites have been identified for grading and three sites have been identified for significant improvements through construction to become ADA accessible. Access sites will be prepared to accommodate all boats appropriate for the water trail. Construction work will be coordinated with the WV Division of Natural Resources/Wildlife Resources Section and will be designed to meet States Organization for Boating Access criteria (SOBA). In addition to the access sites already evaluated, the Committee also maintains a list of optional access sites for possible future development (Figure 1; Options A-D). The Committee will continue to expand and modify the list of access points, facilities, and points of interest as input is received from future public meetings and contacts.

Maintenance

The Cheat River Water Trail will be maintained by the primary sponsor, Friends of the Cheat, in collaboration with the Cheat River Water Trail Committee and partners. Access Site inspections will be performed during the late spring, summer and fall seasons. Check sheets will

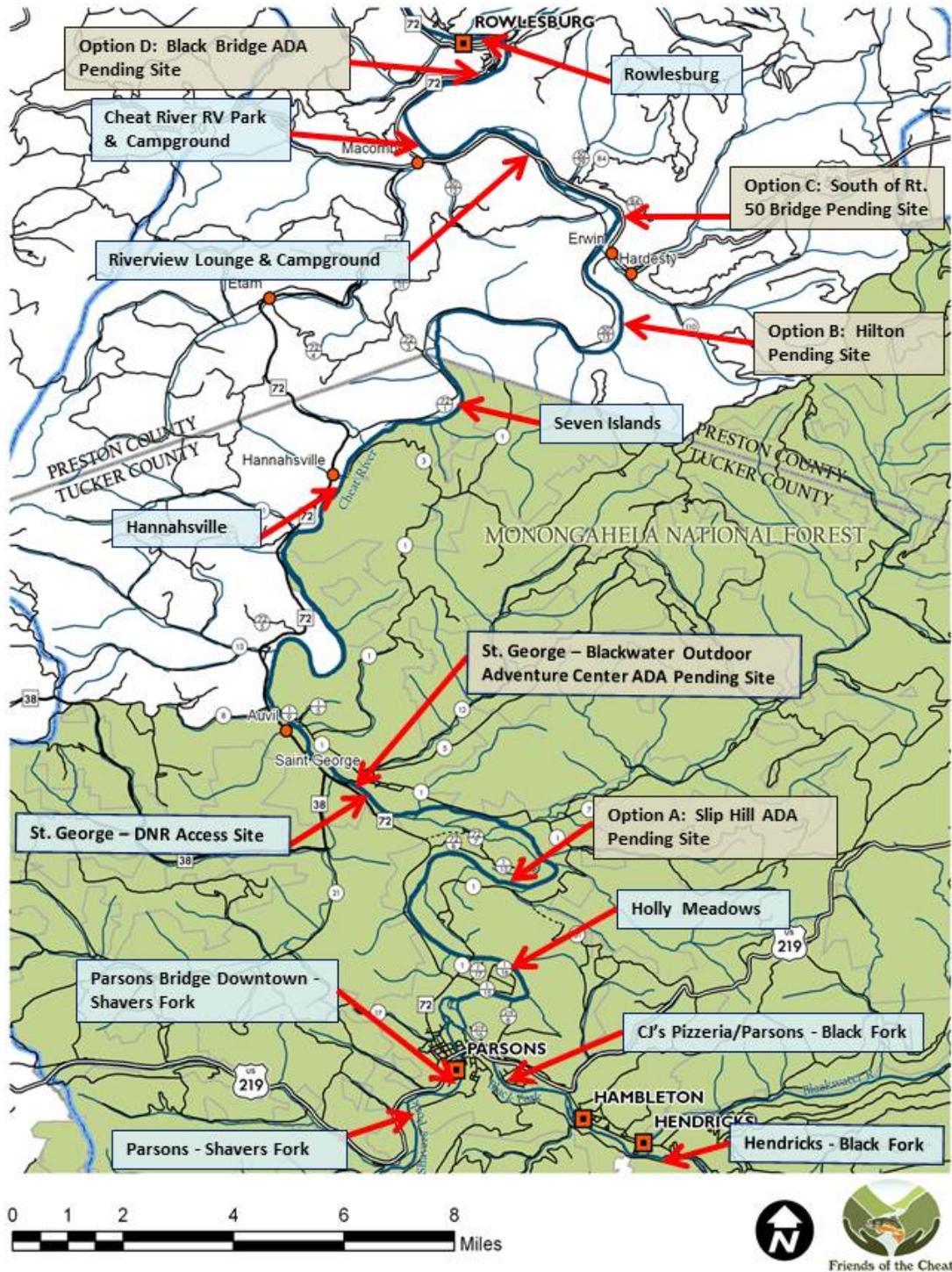
be used to identify items that require corrective action. Site inspectors will report findings to the Access Sub-committee chairman, who will initiate corrective action. The chairman will be responsible for reporting findings and corrective actions taken to the primary sponsor quarterly or more often as requested by the sponsor. The Committee hopes to engage in productive, lasting relationships with local government agencies, non-profit organizations, business owners, and in some cases individual volunteers to complete access site maintenance.

Trail Map, Informative Materials, and Signage

Public marketing material will be developed and actively distributed after designation primarily by the FOC River Cheat Water Trail Committee and its partner organizations including the Greater Morgantown Area and Tucker County Convention and Visitor Bureaus and state Division of Tourism. A trail map (Draft; Figure 1) will be distributed free of charge on printed paper at kiosk structures provided at 3 locations along the trail and will be made available on the trail and sponsor websites. A trip planning guide has already been made available online. Additional materials will be developed with accurate information about mileage between services, section difficulty, river safety, and Leave No Trace Code of Outdoor Ethics. Signage will be installed on the river to indicate access points, camping facilities, points of interest, and hazards. Road signs will also be developed that comply with Department of Transportation's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Figure 1

Upper Cheat River Water Trail Hendricks to Rowlesburg – 39.4 Miles



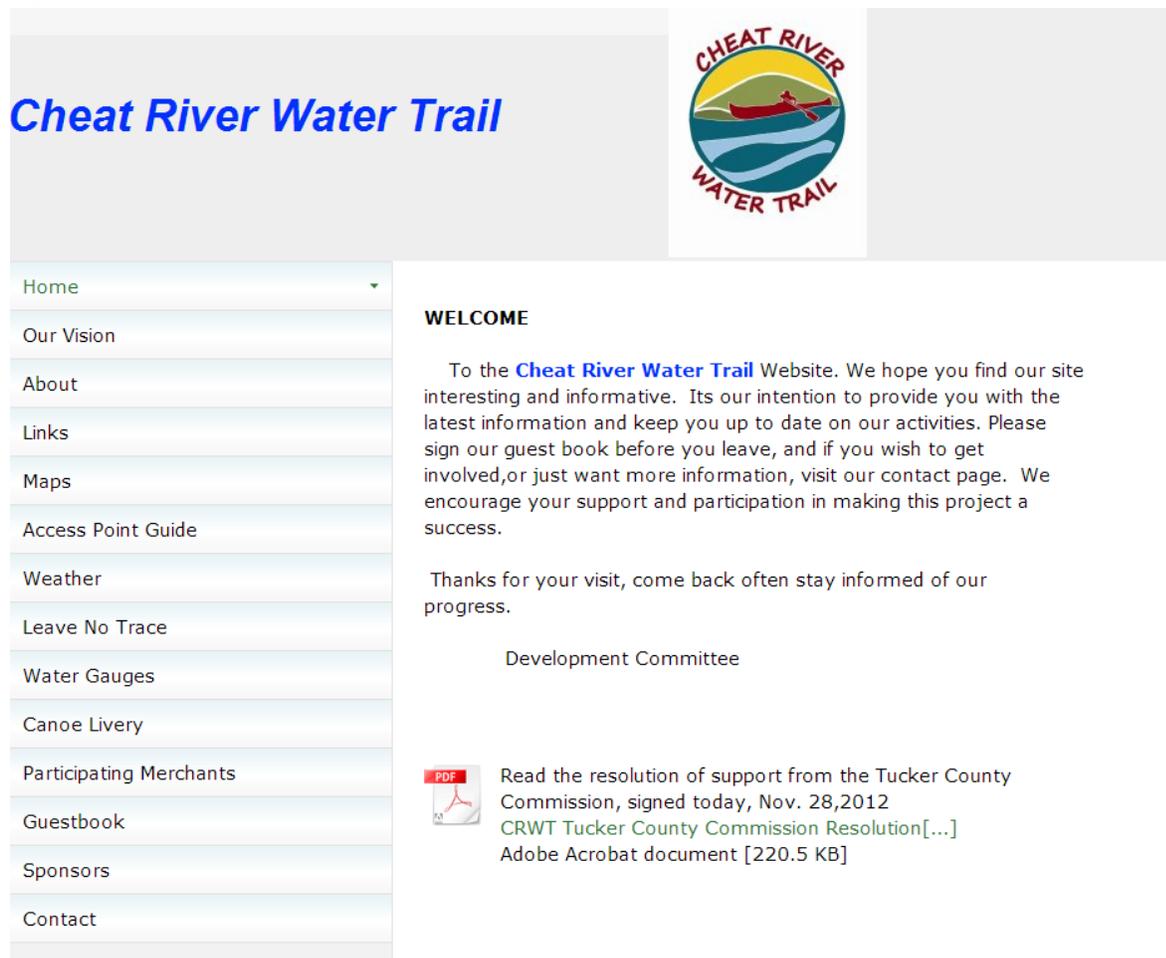
The Planning Process: Public Outreach and Local Government

Web-Based Marketing

One of the first steps in the FOC Cheat River Water Trail Committee's public outreach efforts was the creation of a start-up website. The site was developed to provide another avenue for the local community as well as other interested parties to participate in the process. The site now has over 2000 visits (<http://www.cheatriverwatertrail.org>; Figure 2). The trail is also featured on the Friends of the Cheat website (<http://www.cheat.org/recreation/trails/>).

A Facebook page was also developed for The Upper Cheat River Water Trail, and can be found through search engines. Updates about the trail have been distributed by Friends of the Cheat to their e-mail list of over 900 subscribers. Updates about the trail have also been distributed by Donald C. Strimbeck to approximately 450 people interested in daily updates about the Monongehela River watershed.

Figure 2



Informal Meetings

Many local landowners and business owners were approached one-on-one as committee members were inventorying the access sites. Mr. Gary Thomas, owner of CJ's pizzeria in Parsons, was visited twice. Mr. Thomas expects to see an increase in business because his business is by the water trail and has been identified as an access site. Bob Likens, owner of the Riverview Lounge and Campground, also expects to see improved business due to increased traffic from visitors using the water trail. Committee members have spent a large amount of time visiting and contacting land owners such as Eric Martin, owner of Wilderness Voyageurs and the access site in Rowlesburg, who has been contacted numerous times by telephone to discuss the project, and Lester McCrobie, owner of the Cheat River Campground, hopes the project will increase the number of campers who would use his facility. Volunteers have already spent many hours visiting communities and businesses along the upper Cheat River (as well as in the tourist destinations of Davis and Thomas, WV) handing out brochures and talking with various members of the public at every opportunity.

Local Government

The Committee also met with the following elected officials: Preston County Commission, Tucker County Commission, Rowlesburg Mayor, and Parsons Mayor. Members met with Mayor Dorothy Judy and City Administrator, Jason Myers, of Parsons, WV for two hours where potential handicapped access, site maintenance, and economic benefits were discussed. It was pointed out that most of the news about the Cheat River is typically about sad events associated with high water. The Parsons Mayor wishes to capitalize on the potential positive aspects of the river that the water trail can bring. It was also during this visit that Parsons provided an opportunity for access to an additional access site.

Members met with Mayor Margaret Schollar of Rowlesburg, WV and assistant Kimberly Felton for one hour to discuss the prospects of increased visitors to the area. Mayor Schollar expressed that if enough people use the trail, then someone in the town may be able to establish a small food business. Members have also held a phone conversation with Mayor Salina Roberts of Hendricks, who was supportive of the project.

Members met with Ray and Roxanne Tuesing for about 3 hours. Ray Tuesing is a Hendricks City Council member, and a member of the Hendricks Park Board. Roxanne Tuesing is the chairperson of the Hendricks Park Board. The meeting brought forth talk of an individual who wishes to open a hostel in the area. With the bike trail close by, he felt the water trail might be the catalyst to help that along. Also they wondered if this trail might increase the number of fishermen. Mr. Tuesing was interested in how the water trail might interface with a proposed bike trail.

Friends of the Cheat formally addressed the Preston County Commission to brief them on the water trail initiative, present a resolution in support of the water trail for endorsement, and seek their financial support. Commissioners were supportive of the project and directed the Committee to pursue funding through the Greater Morgantown Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB), as Preston County's hotel/motel tax is distributed to this group. Committee members were joined by Commissioner Vicki Cole to address the GMCVB's Executive Board. The GMCVB was supportive of the initiative and pledged \$5,000 to support start-up project costs including signage and trail map/guide development and printing.

Local governments will be kept informed of trail development activities through Friends of the Cheat newsletters, e-mail correspondence, and timely presentations at their respective public meetings. Friends of the Cheat has historically maintained strong relations with elected officials--local, state, and Federal--and seeks to maintain and expand our network through connections brought by new partner groups and volunteers.

Public Meetings

The Committee hosted public meetings to encourage public support and to provide opportunities for private citizens and community representatives to become involved in the initiative and to offer comments and suggestions. The following notes serve as record of the comments and responses for these meetings.

Internal Agenda for Parsons/Rowlesburg Town Hall Meetings

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 5:30 | Doors open—Committee members manning sign-in sheet, handout table, and display, welcoming folks, distributing name tags, comment cards, and encouraging/explaining mingling |
| 5:30 – 5:45 | Mingle, look at display, pick up handouts, get coffee and snacks, talk to Committee members |
| 5:45 | Welcome & Introductions—Dave C. |
| 5:50-6:05 | Overview Presentation—Amanda (Parsons), Aubrey (Rowlesburg) |
| 6:05-6:20 | Access Site Details—Dave C. |
| 6:20-6:30 | Discussion/Q&A |
| 6:30 | Closing/thank you's |

Presentation to Tucker County Commission

October 24, 2012

Agenda

1. Introductions:
2. Short intro (Designation of a water trail promotes the river, the towns along the river, the businesses along the river, historical sites along the river, it promotes access to the river, fishing, recreational boating, & safety. IT DOES NOT LIMIT WHAT CAN HAPPEN ALONG THE RIVER.)
3. Short history of committee
4. How the designation can improve access (eligible for grants, signs, improvements, kiosks)
5. Information on Tucker County sites (by map);
6. How the designation is a plus for local businesses (web site, maps,)
7. Other benefits
 - a) Encourages a safer and more informed experience for the river users.
 - b) Provides more info about tucker county for boaters
 - c) Enables private owners to partner with public entities, such as DNR, DOH and FOC for liability protection and management of access sites.
8. Request for Support:
 - a) Participation on committee
 - b) attending public meetings
 - c) Resolution
9. Information on recent support
 - a. Resolution signed by Preston County Commission + letter of support to CVB
 - b. Recently received \$5,000 from Greater Morgantown CVB
 - c. Still working on budget phases: \$5,000 will assist with additional mapping, printing maps, brochures, still need start up dollars for signs, access site improvement...etc.

Summary of Meeting

Written by Janet Preston

Jimmy Snyder, Patrick McCann and Janet Preston met with the Tucker County Commission this afternoon. The reception was positive. One commissioner (Mike Rosenau) was a fisherman and could see many benefits. The other two commissioners (Tom Carr – Surveyor) and Lowell Moore (Ex Tucker County Supervisor for DOH) had more questions particularly centered around private property and making sure that we carefully coordinated the process with the private property owners. Concerns were expressed regarding the Hannahsville Access Site and whether or not one would have to travel a private road to use that site; concerns were expressed about the St. George Access Site and whether or not that was

really DOH ground; apparently there have been several complaints about trash and noise from that site. I think we responded appropriately to their questions.

We had an additional offer of support from someone at the meeting - Doug Cooper – I believe his name his; he is a Randolph County resident. I also spoke briefly with Diane Hinkle following the meeting; she will be a county commissioner following the upcoming election and also serves as development director for the Tucker Community Foundation. Jimmy Snyder also talked about the Friends of Cheat and its ongoing commitment to the trail.

The questions/requests from the Tucker County Commission and Committee responses:

1. Please make sure you talk to/communicate well with local landowners; there have been complaints in the past regarding local “partiers” using the banks of the river for party sites; We assured the commission we would do that; and that we would be encouraging boating, not partying;
2. Please make sure you are using public roads to access all sites (not private rights of ways)
3. We had a suggestion regarding developing a sign-in/sign-out system, if possible, to assist local Emergency Services folk in finding/rescuing lost persons/boaters;
4. The commissioners expressed interest in developing handicapped accessible access sites, if possible;
5. The commissioners expressed interest in increasing access for fishermen.

Parsons Town Hall Meeting Notes

Thursday , November 15th, 5:30pm

Attendance: Dave Cassell, Chair CRWT Committee; Bill Newlon, CRWT; Jim Snyder, CRWT; Frank Jernejcic, WVDNR Fisheries Biologist, CRWT; Amanda Pitzer, Executive Director FOC, CRWT; Janet Preston, CRWT; Patrick McCann, Blackwater Outdoor Adventures, CRWT; Deborah (Debbie) Hovatter; Jessica Scowcroft, Marketing Manager Tucker County CVB.

The meeting began at 5:30pm with Committee members conversing informally with interested citizens. Dave Cassell welcomed everyone and Committee members introduced themselves followed by meeting guests. Amanda Pitzer delivered a presentation on the Water Trail initiative. Dave Cassell discussed details of proposed access sites.

A short discussion followed, comments and questions from guests are summarized below:

Travel pace was discussed and Frank Jernejcic noted that he plans for a mile an hour when fishing.

Guests inquired if the 5 Rivers Campground had been contacted. Committee members have spoken with the owner and they were not interested in partnering on an access site, but do want to be included in any advertising/marketing. The majority of their current business is RVs not tent camping.

Debbie Hovatter lives on the river in the last house on river left before the big horseshoe bend downstream of Parsons. Over the years, her family has opened their home to many guests including hosting school field trips on the banks of the river where students were able to fish, swim, learn about local flora and fauna, and enjoy campfire camaraderie.

Jessica Scowcroft said the CVB fields a lot of questions about water levels. Dave Cassell and Patrick McCann explained the flow guide that Patrick is developing. Jessica shared some ideas on how it could be made available to Water Trail users including building a feature into the Tucker County Mobile Mainstreet application for smartphones. It was developed by the WVU School of Journalism and is available for free download on their website. Currently the application can be used to get up-to-the-minute updates on ski conditions. A similar water level feature could be incorporated into the application.

Jessica Scowcroft said frequent questions about the river also include details on swimming holes and fishing spots. It would be good to highlight these areas in guides and other media.

Dave Cassell asked Jessica Scowcroft if the CVB could distribute rack cards and other marketing materials on the Water Trail, and she said yes. However, it is not really urgent for these materials to make it to the CVB before ski season because, as Jessica explained, they see more traffic in the summer and fall. The group discussed other locations that could distribute materials including Canaan Valley State Park, Blackwater Falls State Park, and Whitegrass (cross-country ski destination).

Amanda Pitzer informed Jessica Scowcroft that the Committee would like to meet with CVB staff and address their Board of Directors in upcoming months. Jessica said it is best to come prepared with tangible things they can help with. She also explained they do not have a large budget so they are eager to offer assistance over cash. One idea that was discussed was having businesses and organizations like the CVB sponsor specific access sites including kiosks, signage, etc. Each site could display the sponsor's logo and contact information.

Dave Cassell shared the idea of mounting a web cam to stream a live video of the Shavers Fork—similar to the snow cams found at Timberline Resort and Whitegrass. The group thought this was a great idea.

Jessica Scowcroft shared contact information for the Ruedigers. They are a new family in the area who participate in river recreation. David will teach biology starting next fall at Tucker County High School. Amanda Pitzer suggested that the Committee could potentially collaborate with David's classes for outdoor, hands-on biology lessons along the Water Trail.

The meeting concluded at 6:40pm.

Rowlesburg Town Hall Meeting Notes

Friday, November 16th, 5:30pm

Attendance: Dave Cassell, Chair CRWT Committee; Bill Newlon, CRWT; Frank Jernejcic, WVDNR Fisheries Biologist, CRWT; Amanda Pitzer, Executive Director FOC, CRWT; Aubrey Harris, FOC OSM/VISTA, CRWT; Devra Deems, CRWT; Crystal Dean, President, Rowlesburg Revitalization Committee; Michelle Wolford, Dominion Post Preston County Bureau Chief; Kimberly Felton, Rowlesburg Town Clerk; Margaret Schollar, Mayor of Rowlesburg

The meeting began at 5:30pm. Amanda Pitzer welcomed everyone and Committee members introduced themselves followed by meeting guests. Aubrey Harris delivered a presentation on the Water Trail initiative. Dave Cassell discussed details of proposed access sites.

A short discussion followed, comments and questions from guests are summarized below:

Dave Cassell pointed out the proposed ADA access site at the Black Bridge which is located in Rowlesburg. The group was happy to see an ADA site in their area, especially with their aging local population and Rowlesburg's veteran ties including the WWII museum housed at the Szilagyi Center for the Visual and Performing Arts and annual Civil War reenactments held near the Rowlesburg Park.

Michelle Wolford inquired if the Committee had faced any "naysayers" not supportive of the project. The Committee has not encountered any people against the initiative. Amanda Pitzer pointed out that by developing and promoting public access sites, including campgrounds, that this could alleviate trespassers on private land.

The length of time a specific trip on the trail would take was discussed. The Committee told the group that they are working on a trip planning guide based on river flow. The group said that this is often hard for inexperienced paddlers to figure out and that a guide would be very helpful. The Committee reinforced the importance of developing the trail with beginners in mind.

The idea of a sign-in sheet at access sites was discussed. The group thought this was a good idea for safety. Cell phone service is not consistently available through the full ~39 miles of

trail. Amanda Pitzer noted that FOC is working with the Preston County E911 Center to incorporate access points and key river features into their 911 GIS mapping system.

Dave Cassell told the group that the Cheat Water Trail website is seeing good traffic with over 1500 hits in only a few months.

Rowlesburg Mayor Marg Schollar noted that she felt this project is a “wonderful opportunity” for the region. She said that the drive to Parsons from Rowlesburg is beautiful from a car, let alone from the water! The Committee invited her (and everyone in attendance) on the group’s maiden voyage.

Crystal Dean asked if the trail would impact fishing. Frank Jernejcic explained that improved access to the river will only enhance fishing opportunities for all ages and abilities.

Mayor Marg Schollar welcomed the Committee to use the Senior Center/Town Hall for any future meetings. Dave Cassell said that the Committee may have another meeting in the spring and thanked Marg for her offer.

The meeting concluded at 6:20pm.

Printed Materials

One of the first actions of the Committee was to develop an official logo for the Cheat River Water Trail (Figure 3).

Figure 3



The water trail was advertised in 4 newspapers (The Preston County Journal, The Parsons Advocate, The Dominion Post, and The Charleston Gazette). Legal advertisements were published in the Preston County Journal and Parsons Advocate. An informative article was published in the West Virginia Highlands Voice printed newsletter (available online) and FOC printed newsletter. Notices and flyers were posted and distributed in cities and local businesses along the water trail route. See attached examples of printed advertisements.

Attachments for The Planning Process: Public Outreach and Local Government

Appendix A

Example Access Site Assessment

CRWT (#)	Name
River Mile	0
Lat/Long	-
Bank Slope	Developed or Undeveloped
Land Cover	Mowed or overgrown
Needs Improved	YES Or NO If Yes , Describe:
Property Owner	DOH Municipality Private
Liability Waiver Required	YES Or NO If Yes , copy on file Y Or N
ADA Accessible	YES Or NO
Available Parking Spaces	YES Or NO
Restroom	YES Or NO
ADA Accessible Restroom	YES Or NO
Camping	YES Or NO
Water Trail Sign -Highway	YES Or NO
Water Trail Sign - River	YES Or NO ***If Yes River Right or River Left
Trash Receptacle	YES Or NO
State,Local Agency or Non-Profit organization who will be Responsible for Public Access points and Amenities	(Required for trail designation)
Nearby Points of Interest	

Appendix B

Master Access Evaluation Spreadsheet (information not final)

NAME	Distance to next point	Total Miles	Bank/slope	Land Cover Cleared	Useable as-is	Liability Waiver Req'd	Handicapped Accessible	Potential Handicap Accessible Site	Est. Parking spaces	Restroom	Handicapped Accessible Restroom	Camping	Maint. Resp.	Owner	Owner contacted permission granted	Lat	Long	Trash Receptacle	Comments
Hendricks	3.2	0.00	Partially Developed	10%	NO	NO	NO	NO	Open	Yes	NO	NO	City	City	ON HOLD	039 04'23.7"	079 38'03"	NO	
Parsons CJ's Pizzeria (Blackfork)	Next Point (C-4) 3.1 M	3.20	Developed	YES	YES	YES	No	NO	Open	Yes	Yes,nearby	YES 1.5 Miles North		Private	YES	039 05'56.6"	079 40'23.8"	Yes	Gary Thomas
Parsons Option A			Developed	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	Open	NO	NO	YES 1.5 Miles North	City	CITY	YES	039 05'21.4"	079 40'47"	NO	
Parson Shavers Fork	Next Point (C-4) 3.1 M	0 Opt Put-In	Developed	NO	NO	NO	No	NO	Open	Yes	Yes,nearby	YES 1.5 Miles North	City	City	YES	039 05' 49.6"	079 40'42.4"	Yes	
Holly Meadows	8.06	6.30	Developed	Yes	Yes	NO	No	NO	6	No	No	No		DOH		039 07'21.6"	079 40'31.1"	No	
Slip Hill			Developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	YES	6	No	NO	No		Private		039 08'15.2"	079 39'48.3"	No	Confirm owner
St.George	8.36	14.36	UN-DEV	NO	NO	NO	No	NO	Open	YES	No	No		DOH		039 09'53.9"	079 42'26.7"	No	
Hannahville	3.06	22.72	Developed	Yes	YES	NO	No		5	No	No	No		DOH		039 14' 41.2"	079 42'29.1"	No	
Seven Islands	9.31	25.78	Undev	No	Yes	NO	No	YES	3	No	No	No		DOH		039 16'18.6"	079 41'15.2"	No	
Hilton(North of Rt.50 Bridge)			Developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	YES	6	No	No	No		Private	No Contact			No	Dr.Hilton
4 Miles North of Rt 50 Bridge River left								YES						??					"Bam" Jim S. for info
Riverview Lounge	3.3	35.08	Developed	Yes	YES	YES	No	YES	10	Yes	No	Yes		Private	YES	039 19'11.9"	079 40'58.2"	Yes	Bob Likens
Rowlesburg	Trail Ends	38.39	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	No	No	Open	Yes	No	3 Miles at #12		Private	YES	039 20' 57"	079 40'15.6"	Yes	Eric Martin
Rowlesburg	Trail Ends						No	YES	??	Nearby	No	3 Miles at #12		??		039 20.5' 66"	079 39.5'56"		

