

Scott County – SITE VISIT

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On April 4th, the consultants and Jack McClanahan toured Scott County.

Scott County was formed by an act of the general assembly on November 24, 1814 from parts of Washington, Lee, and Russell Counties and was named for General Winfield Scott. The county seat is Gate City with a population of approximately 2,200. The county has a population of 24,000. Other towns include Clinchport, Duffield, Dungannon, Nickelsville and Weber City.

Our first stop was at the overlook along U.S. 58/421



Jack Mac pointed out the Knobs and Clinch Mountain Range.



Pap Paws Cabin is also located along U.S. 58/421 and has an excellent view of the mountain ranges. It has a full kitchen, loft area, living room and a unique covered outdoor eating area shown below. This cabin is an excellent example of one type of lodging needed along the trails and at trailheads.



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TOWN OF DUFFIELD



Duffield is a small community with a population of less than 70. At the intersection of U.S. 58/421 and U.S. 23 enroute to Natural Tunnel State Park, the old Duffield Depot still stands. Next to it is a caboose and other railroad artifacts.

Natural Tunnel State Park

www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/nat.shtml

Amenities include:



Natural Tunnel is impressive. It includes a chair lift to the top, a scenic boardwalk, visitor center/gift shop, a railroad engine display, picnic shelters, overnight campground facilities, swimming pool, amphitheater, fishing and biking.

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Hiking, mountain bike and self-guided trails at Natural Tunnel

Natural Tunnel State Park offers seven walking trails, the longest one being 1.1 miles long. These trails lead to the unique features of the park: the tunnel floor, Lover's Leap, Tunnel Hill and Gorge Ridge. A 500-foot boardwalk and observation deck provide accessibility to guests with disabilities. Visitors may also take a chairlift to the mouth of the tunnel via chairlift when it's operational. Most trails are open to mountain bikes with bike rentals available at the campground host campsite.



Potential Horseback Riding Trail



This was a wonderful all weather surfaced road in Scott County that would be excellent for both horseback riding or for wagons. The road did not appear to get much traffic yet had some wonderful farms and an old rock wall along a major portion of the route. Jack McClanahan can provide a better description of where this road is located and the length of trail that might be developed.

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Carter Family Fold - Tourist Attraction for the area



Located just a few miles U.S. 58/421, The Carter Family Fold and home museum includes the homeplace of A.P. Carter. Officially opening in 1979, the Center's objective is to promote old-time music and pay tribute to the Original Carter Family (A.P, Sara, and Maybelle Carter).



Museum



Old home place of A.P. Carter



Other outbuildings

Concerts are held every Saturday night in the auditorium located next door to the museum. The concerts highlight the musical style made popular by the Carter Family, considered by many as country music's first family.



The Carter Family Fold, located just off Hwy 709 in Hiltons VA on A.P. Carter Memorial Highway, is one of a number of stops on "The Crooked Road", Virginia's Heritage Music Trail.

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POTENTIAL BIKE ROUTE

There is an excellent road that starts at The Carter Family Fold then follows the Holston River and eventually ends back at Carter Family Fold creating a 6.5 mile loop. Very scenic and the roads are excellent for bicycling.



Route Description: Just turn right onto Hwy 691 across from Carter Family Fold. There is a large parking area to the left right on Hwy 691 which could be turned into a park & ride area. The ride is 6 ½ miles long and creates a loop right back at The Carter Family Fold.

Features along the route:



The route takes one past the old Holston Grist mill.



Across the river from the mill is a new dock and covered pavilion.

POTENTIAL CANOE TRAIL

The Holston River has been designated a scenic river. It would also seem to be an excellent river to possibly launch a canoe livery service as an added amenity of the offerings at Carter Family Fold.

POTENTIAL RAILS TO TRAILS

It has been proposed to develop a hiking and biking trail similar to the Creeper Trail. This trail would follow the old Norfolk Southern line. If fully developed, it would connect Bristol to Carter Family Fold. In 2000, Washington County purchased 12 miles of the Southern Railway with this in mind but there has been tremendous controversy over these efforts. Much of the rail bed has been removed and some of the property has been returned to the original property owners. In fact, a few homes have actually been built right where the track once ran. It would appear this particular project may have a difficult time coming to fruition.

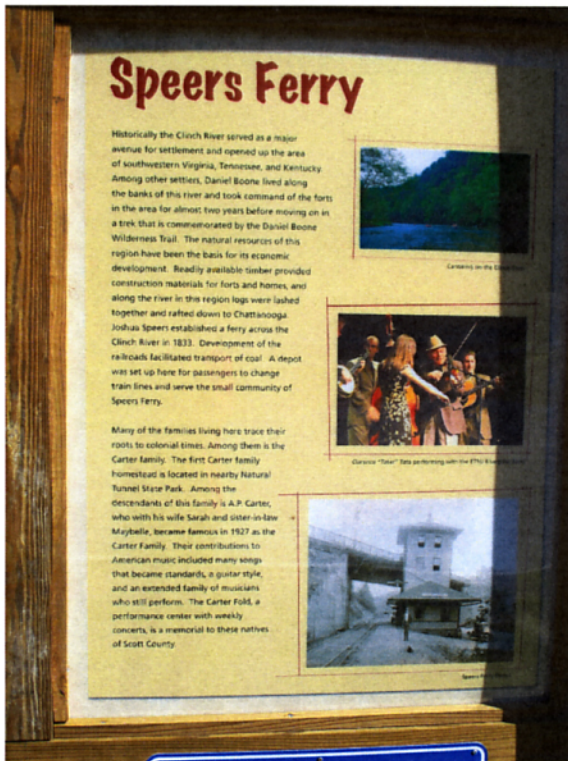
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POTENTIAL FOR THEMED TRAIL

The railroad played a major role in SW Virginia and could become the focus for a themed “trail” connecting important railroad sites throughout Scott County including the depot in Duffield, the railroad engine display at Natural Tunnel, and the Copper Creek Railroad Trestles featured below.



The Copper Creek Railroad Trestles are still visible today.



In 1833, a ferry was established to enable the crossing of the Clinch River. Soon the town of Speers Ferry was established. Timber became a major industry and were tied together and floated down river to Chattanooga. Later a rail line and depot was built in this small community transport both timber and coal out of the region. This stop too could be included on the Rail Trail.

Scott County has a wonderful display set up in front of the Copper Creek Railroad Trestles providing interpretive information on each of the sites mentioned above.



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Excellent Visitor Display



The display also includes information on the Crooked Road and the Wilderness Road Crossing.



A solar operated transmitter allows travelers to tune into 100.1 FM on their car radio to learn more.

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POTENTIAL FOR HORSE TRAILS

Scott County has a very active equestrian organization called the Scott County Trail Riders. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working to promote and encourage the development of the horse industry in Scott County, Virginia and the surrounding region by offering community activities and educational and youth programs. Its mission is to *“To promote and provide equine activities in Scott County and the surrounding region for our youth and fellow horsemen, while encouraging sportsmanship, family values and lasting friendships with our community and members through dedication and public involvement. We promote all breeds and activities pertaining to each breed”*. They hold numerous horse shows and special events throughout the year and have a 150' x 250' riding ring located in Dungannon VA where many of the events are held.

At one of the preliminary map meetings, Eugene McClellan provided the following list of potential locations for equestrian trails throughout Scott County and beyond. He also recommended that Sherry Hilton be contacted. Ms. Hilton is the current president of the Scott County Trail Riders.

Horse Trail Ride Possibilities

In the Scott County Area

Provided by Charlie Green (cdgreen@mounet.com)
via Eugene McClellan (hemmcclellan@earthlink.net)

- Jasper to Kane Gap: 5 hours on Forest Service road and logging trail on Powell Mountain where Daniel Boone led settlers. Reasonable path.
- Lovelady Gap to Big Stone Gap and back on gravel Forest Service Road Route 641. Approximately 18 mile round trip. Limited parking.
- Mabe to Sawmill, Flannery Ridge and Pick Breeches Ridge. Approximately 11 hours?. Limited parking. Good Fall Color ride.
- Stanleytown to Maple Gap, Flannery Ridge and back. Several options and distances. Good parking. Primitive camping.
- Devils Fork up Straight Fork Ridge and Devils Fork Loop Trail. Carle and back down Route 619. 8 hour trip. Or up and back in 5 hours. Limited parking.
- Devils Fork up Route 619 to 704 and back. Time and distance at your discretion. Limited parking. Park and ride from Fort Blackmore Elementary School.
- Devils Fork up 619 to 704 to Big Flat Top. Up and back, approximately 25 miles. Limited parking.
- Hagan Hall/Branham Road to Mahogany Hollow. Up and back. Nice leisurely ride. Approximately 5 hours. Gravel and Forest Service gated roads. Reasonable parking.
- Hagan Hall/Branham Road to Bark Camp Lake. Up and back on gravel. 5 hour trip. Reasonable parking.
- Hagan Hall/Branham Road to Little Stony Falls. Up and back. Approximately 8 hours. Gravel Road. Reasonable parking.

*Note: Sherry Hilton - Current president of Scott County Trail Riders (276)479-2048
Lives in Buchanan.*