

APPENDIX H: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
Series of Town Meetings - Wise & Russell County
St. Paul Meeting



APPENDIX H: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – SERIES OF TOWN MEETINGS

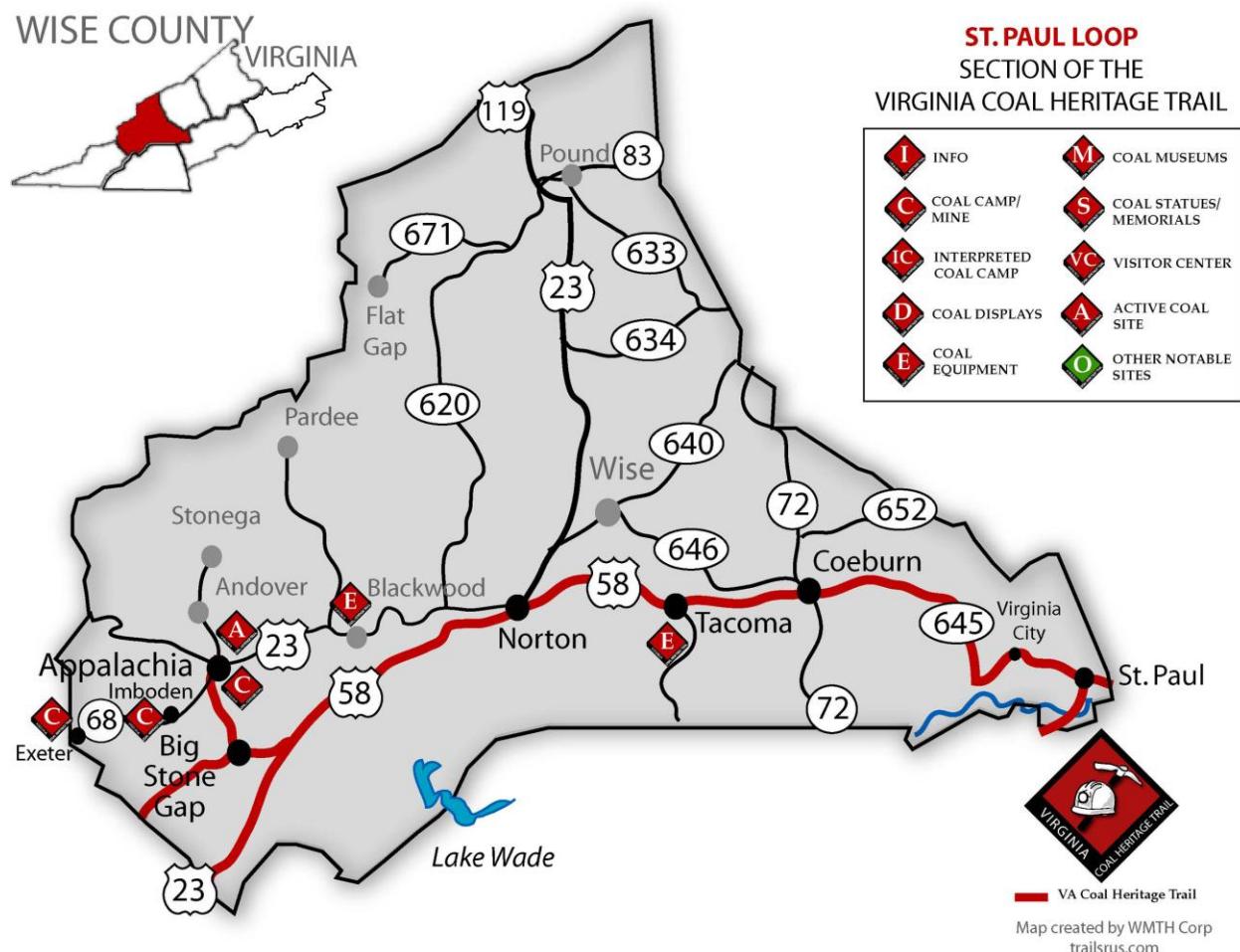
Virginia Coal Heritage Trail Corridor Management Plan Meeting
 in St. Paul on the Wise and Russell County portions of the St. Paul Loop
 September 23rd 2010 at 9 am

In attendance:

Dedra S. Helbert, Dickenson-Russell Coal
 Dawn Jessee, Oxbow Center Tourism
 Sarah Love McReynolds, Coal Heritage Trail Advisory Committee & Spearhead Trails
 Sharon Steele, Deputy Mayor of St. Paul
 Kyle Fletcher, Mayor of St. Paul
 Loretta Mays, Coeburn Town Manager
 Linda Tate, Russell County Chamber & Chairman of Coal Heritage Trail Advisory Committee
 Samantha Landingham, Heart of the Appalachia



**Below is the section of the Byway discussed in the Wise/Russell County meeting.
 Primary coal sites are noted on the map.**





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St. Paul:



The old theater house



Once a popular hotel



The Hillman House



The Ice House

- Hillman House, the oldest building in St. Paul, has been renovated and will become the welcome center for St. Paul and provide information on the history of the area and the Heart of Appalachia Bike Trail.
- Rich railroad history. Railroad museum being developed in the Railroad Superintendent's home located next to the railroad track. Railroad collection available. *Note: Parking, signage and hours of operation need to be addressed.*
- The Ice House (over 100 years old) is being renovated and will soon provide information on trails and other activities and offerings in the area. May also be the location to rent canoes, kayaks and find out more about the many trail initiatives in the area.
- 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.

Recommend a St. Paul Historic Walking Tour to start at the Hillman House with information available at Town Hall, the railroad museum, Oxbow Center and other public buildings throughout the community.

*Suggest sign location on the corner of Hwy 58A just east of St. Paul which says "Where the Coalfields meet the Bluegrass".
There are 3 acres and the potential to add a tourism kiosk*

The Oxbow Center has plans for providing tourist information for Southwest Virginia in their facility. It has many assets including:

- Ample parking available for cars and buses.
- Large lobby for potential tourism displays and information
- Easily accessible restroom facilities
- Handicapped accessible facility
- Very visible location with signage visible and easy access from Hwy 58A



Recommend that an area be set aside in this facility to provide interpretive information on the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail featuring maps, displays and brochures for sights one will see on both the Pocahontas Trail and the St. Paul Loop which go through this area. Information can also be provided on the Norton Loop portion of the trail.

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It was suggested to include a side trip to Castlewood, Copper Ridge, Cemetery and Powell Valley

- Castlewood includes a church, lodging house, bank and post office.
- History of Carty Boy

Please note that the road is tight and would not be recommended for tour buses. It is also very limited what one could learn from stopping here without providing interpretive information.

Recommendation would be to provide a display on Castlewood at the Hillman House.



Turning right off of Hwy 58 onto Mew Road

- Coal Heritage Trail signage is needed prior to the turn letting travelers know they need to prepare to turn right.

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, this 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.

- Steve Banner owns the property and should be contacted to determine his interest in this.



Recommendation:

The current location of the Moore's Fort Historical marker needs to be moved in front of the "Union Hall" building. It is currently located at the edge of a trailer park.

Tacoma

- Community surrounded by train tracks
- Tipple visible from road
- Old tipple still exists
- A stop on the Crooked Road Music Trail
- Tacoma school has been converted into a community center. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places



Recommendation: Need interpretive sign. Contact: Robbie Robbins to find out more about Tacoma's rich history.



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Coeburn/Toms Creek

- Recommendation:

- Coeburn and Toms Creek should be included on the Coal Heritage Trail as part of the trail system and not just side trips. They will both be added to the master map of the route.



NW Caboose



Coeburn Depot converted into offices and meeting space



Historic Lay's Hardware
Music every weekend.



Numerous bridge add beauty to the downtown



Fountain

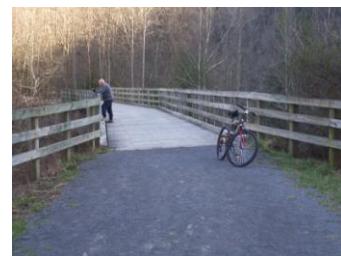
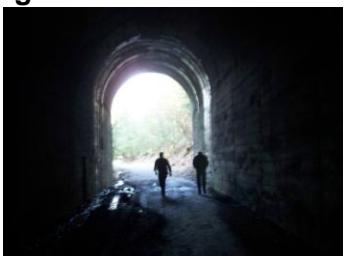


A number of historic buildings along Main Street



Old Dominion Power Co.
Reminder of the past.

Guest River Gorge



Noted side trip site from Coeburn.

Guest River Gorge for hiking, biking and nature walk just a few miles outside of Coeburn



Toms Creek

Toms Creek (2 miles north of Coeburn) was considered the cultural center for many coal camps throughout the seven county region.

- It 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.

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- Tom's Creek – Had the longest row of coke ovens anywhere in the world? Rule was “no smoke on Sundays” so the women could do their wash.
(Noted from Big Stone Gap meeting)
- Below is how Toms Creek looks today plus a description of what it once was.



The depot and one other brick building is about all that remains of Toms Creek Mining Camp overshadowed today by a very active coal operation.

For more on Toms Creek, see story by Edison S. Perry in Chapter IX: Action Plan on Oral and Written History of the region.

Virginia City

- The Virginia City Presbyterian Church circ 1895 is located in the middle of a coal reclamation site. It was purchased years ago by a coal company who moved the church and paid the congregation for a much larger church to be built. The small church was later given back to the congregation. It has now been moved three times and currently is located almost exactly where it originally once stood.
- In the background, Dominion Coal Energy is building a huge energy plant. Both the church and the development are very visible from 58A. The strategic location of the church offers ample parking and an excellent area to pull-off and interpret the site.



Dominion Coal Energy Plant



Historic Virginia City Presbyterian Church, circa 1893



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.