



Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.

Memorandum:

To: Advisory Committee Members and Interested Citizens
CC: Randy Williams and Dawn Kupferer
From: Jim Klein
Date: 6/8/12
Subject: Walton Road Scenic Byway: DRAFT Advisory Committee Meeting Summary (6-5-12) -

The Walton Road Scenic Byway Advisory Committee convened its second corridor management planning meeting on June 8, 2012 at the Garden Inn Bed and Breakfast at Bee Rock. Members from Roane, Cumberland, Putnam and Smith counties were in attendance.

Jim Klein, from Lardner/Klein provided an update on the progress of the WRSB Corridor Management Plan and discussed some of the comments and suggestions from the first round of public meetings conducted in April.

Increasing awareness through recognition programs such as National Register Phil Thomason of Thomason and Associates reviewed some of the team's findings on the significance of the Walton Road and identified some opportunities for increasing the recognition of the route and its resources. Mr. Thomason recommended that some of the historic resources that have not been recognized on the National Register of Historic Places be considered for that honorific (see the map handout provided at the meeting identifying historic resources), especially those already designated as local historic districts.

Committee members identified the following sites as significant places and wanted to be sure they were included in the inventory and for potential recognition programs:

- Monterey – Standing Stone (both original site of and relocated monument), Depot Museum (not as an historic site, but as a visitor site), General Wilders Home, Imperial Hotel
- Rockwood – WPA era mural in Rockwood Post office
- Walton Road – all of the stands has potential historic sites, note the walk up to the cemetery at the I-40 Kemmer stand (former trail at rest area removed by TDOT)
- John's Place, Cookeville – recently listed
- Chestnut Mound–potential historic sites at the road down to Granville (present day Route 53); it was noted that the historic routes and paths existed that connected the ferry crossings to the early communities in Smith County along the Walton Road.
- Ferry sites on Cumberland River – South Carthage located by the “u” in the printed word “South Carthage” on the map handout; Jerry B. Mitchell Ferry
- Cordell Hull Dam – 50th Anniversary coming in November of 2013
- Mountain District was largest judicial district (historical significance)
- Coke ovens at Westel (see <http://mushysmoochings.blogspot.com/2010/03/secrets-of-lake-waldensia-coke-ovens.html>) for a description)
- Tannery town (former) at Mt. Roosevelt (? – need more information about this)

Kathleen Williams mentioned an issue that they faced that should be addressed in the plan. While they have conserved sites such as Black Mountain or Devil Step Hollow, they have not been able to open them up to visitor use due to lack of management resources to meet anticipated visitor needs. This is a significant problem and anything that the plan could do to demonstrate the need and value of more management capacity would be very helpful.

EdgeTrekker: Increasing awareness through web-based trip planner

Zebulon Turrentine, Executive Director of the Alliance for the Cumberlands discussed the new Edgetrekker trip planning website and how each community can utilize it to increase heritage tourism potential. (<http://www.edgetrekker.com>). Mr. Turrentine demonstrated how to add sites to the data base using an example of a few of the sites that are already on the system and tagged as “Walton Road” sites. Mr. Turrentine also demonstrated how to create an itinerary, which will be very useful tool for increasing public awareness of the resources associated with the Walton Road and for helping visitors to find and learn about those resources.

Committee members asked about the potential to move this to a mobile platform. Zeb indicated that was a goal, but first they wanted to make sure they could get it to work well here.

Smith County committee members asked about adding in Smith County sites since it is outside the Alliance for the Cumberlands’ territory. Zeb indicated he had asked the producers of the web site and it would cost about \$400 dollars to add in an additional County.

Committee members asked about the potential for adding in the other trails, such as the Quilt Trail and Civil War Trail. Zeb indicated they were looking in to that, but anything could be tagged with “Civil War Trail” or “Quilt Trail” so that it could be done.

A question was asked about key words and tags and Zeb mentioned using a key word lookup such as google.adwords.com to estimate the monthly or yearly searches for that key word or phrase.

Conservation easements and other conservation programs

Kathleen Williams, Executive Director of the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation (<http://www.tenngreen.org/>) reviewed some of the recent accomplishments of the Foundation and welcomed involvement of anyone with an interest in the Walton Road to become part of the land conservation committee. Ms. Williams also provided information about the Foundation’s work with conservation easements – a completely voluntary and private land conservation method may have tax benefit for the property owner. Ms. Williams encouraged the group to access and utilize the resources on the Foundation’s web site. Richard Quin introduce the group to the resources available on the Tennessee Highlands web page (includes inventory of Putnam County) at <http://www.tenngreen.org/projects/high-adventure/>

Increasing awareness through education and interpretation

Jim Klein presented the teams additional thoughts on an interpretive framework for the Walton Road Scenic Byway building upon the comments and suggestions made at the initial advisory committee meeting and at the public meetings. Jim presented ideas and opportunities for interpreting two broad themes and seven sub-themes:

Frontier Routes and Pioneer Pathways

- Exploring the Cumberland Plateau
- Staking Claims (Early Surveys and Settlements)
- Travel Routes Over the Cumberland Plateau
 - North Carolina Military Trace of 1788
 - Walton and Emory Roads of 1795
 - Cumberland Turnpike of 1802
- Stands, Inns and Hostelrys

Pioneer Culture - People and Places

- Living on the Plateau: Ridge and Valley
- Working the Plateau
- Giving Back to the Plateau - leaders and heroes

Jim identified two large gaps in the frontier story that presented the best opportunity for the Walton Road Scenic Byway: the need to explain the history of early pioneer and frontier routes to overcome the often conflicting information about Avery's Trace, Walton Road, and other frontier explorations; and, the need to present the complex relationships and challenges facing both the Cherokee and the white settlers as the white settlers began first exploring, then laying claim to and then settling in to the Cumberland Settlements – all involving crossing the Cherokee lands at their narrowest point which is roughly the location of the Walton Road and Emory Trace – the most direct route across the rugged Cumberland Plateau.

Jim handed out a table, which provides an initial evaluation of the visitor readiness of many of the interpretive opportunity sites, as well as which themes, and sub-themes are already being interpreted or could be interpreted at the site.

After lunch, Jim explained the need for some early action efforts to get the Byway ready to market to visitors. Jim asked the committee members to identify the specific place in their community where they could begin interpreting the Walton Road right away to serve as a welcome center and orientation point for visitors coming to the byway. Jim indicated that some of the sites are really hard to find or understand. By directing visitors to exhibits at community-based visitor centers, visitors could learn about the frontier routes and pioneer culture and then be they would know what to look for when they went exploring.

Kingston – Southwest Point is visitor ready now and has some of the story told through interpretation. The Expo Center might be another option as there is always something going on there. The ferry crossing is an important topic for interpretation (Frontier Routes theme)

Rockwood – by October, Rockwood will have welcome center that could serve as an orientation point, plus they are planning on using storefronts for additional exhibits. Rockwood would be a good place to talk about the Native American story, especially about the tolls.

Crab Orchard – no current site, but this is an important priority area for interpretation. A site is needed

I-40 rest area (Kemmers Stand) – the best opportunity to capture the travel audience and introduce them to the Walton Road story. A trail could be built to interpret the Walton

Road (up to the cemetery). Note that a trail was built there in the 1970s and taken out due to some safety concerns.

Monterey – currently the Depot is serving as a visitor center. The American Indian Cultural Center is moving closer to a location in Monterey that could serve as a primary interpretive facility filling in the gap of information about Native American culture on the Cumberland Plateau as white men began to explore, stake claims and settle. The library is another possibility. Additional sites for future consideration include the Imperial Hotel.

Algood – White Plains would provide a future site, however the house is up for public auction in late June.

Baxter – future plans to reconstruct the depot.

Smith County Visitor Center/Rest Area at Buffalo Valley on I-40 - could provide an excellent opportunity to again introduce visitors to the themes of the Walton Road and where they could find the places that help to tell the story.

Carthage – current visitor center at Chamber offices and could provide the initial location for visitor information about the Walton Road. Smith County Heritage Museum is planning a Walton Road exhibit and would be the optimum location for the permanent community-based interpretation of the Walton Road in Carthage and Smith County. The Walton grave site is also a good opportunity for additional interpretation.

Additional Comments

Jim presented a number of examples of interpretive exhibit tools and techniques that may be appropriate for interpreting sites that are either no longer extant or that otherwise have lost integrity – something that will be needed for the Walton Road. This included using murals, historical photographs, artworks, living history, etc.

A comment was made that a good way to bring attention to the Walton Road would be to have a covered wagon train travel the distance of the Walton Road. Jim had shown an image of the wagons traveling along the National Road as part of an annual event in Maryland.