February 2022

TRAIL TOWN TRIBUNE

Damascus, Virginia, Friendliest Town on the Trail

PHOTO BY JESSE KOKOTEK

DAMASCUS WINS BEST OF THE BLUE RIDGE!

In the 2022 Readers' Choice Awards, Blue Ridge Outdoors has recognized the Virginia Creeper Trail as the Best Biking Trail of the Blue Ridge and Runner-Up to Best Trail overall. The Appalachian Trail was voted as Best Trail of the Blue Ridge. Damascus has the special honor of hosting both of these trails and their visitors. Best of the Blue Ridge awards are determined by the votes of the readers of Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine. Stop by Town Hall or one of our local businesses to pick up your copy of the February issue!

BEST OF THE BLUE RIDGE
WINNER! 2022
BLUE RIDGE outdoors
go outside and play.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL WRIGHT

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Meet the new staff!
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DAMASCUS IN THE NEWS:

Town of Damascus invests in outdoor recreation, Jan 27 2022

Damascus hires two residents to manage outdoor recreation and tourism program, Jan 25 2022

Damascus VA woman runs healthy meal-prep business, Jan 23 2022

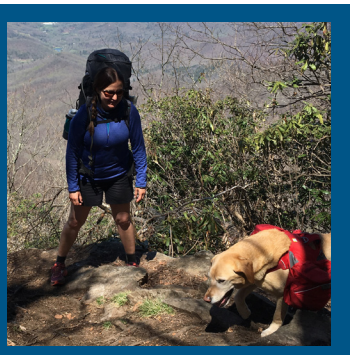
Development of dog park location ongoing, Dec 29 2021

Students from Holston High volunteer in Damascus, Dec 22 2021

@DamascusVAEvents
@DamascusVirginia

MEET OUR NEW TOWN STAFF!

And **THANK YOU to Eva Meyer**! Eva served the town as treasurer from April 2020 to January 2022. Although we will miss her at Town Hall, you can still find her around town at Trail Days and other events!



ELENA SMITH, Treasurer
Favorite Damascus thing: the community

Elena is a fifth generation Damascus resident. She loves dogs, hiking, and biking. She drove for the Damascus Volunteer Rescue Squad for 2 years and is a current member of the Damascus Dog Park Committee. Elena is excited to serve her community as a member of the town staff.
treasurer@damascus.org

JASON JUSTICE, Recreation Project Manager
Favorite Damascus thing: local trout streams
Jason is from Damascus and graduated from Holston High School. He went to UVA Wise and has a background in construction and information technology (IT). He has served in the town's volunteer fire department for the past two years and is a Type 2 Wildland Firefighter. Jason enjoys hunting, trapping, and fishing.
projectmanager@damascus.org

JULIE KROLL, Recreation Program Director
Favorite Damascus thing: access to so many great trails
Julie is from Abingdon and graduated from Brevard College in 2016 with a degree in Wilderness Leadership and Experiential Education. She is a Wilderness First Responder (WFR) and Leave No Trace Master Educator. Her background includes event planning, marketing, and outdoor education. She enjoys kayaking, mountain biking, and hiking with trail dog, Pico.
recreation.director@damascus.org

MARTY BERRY, Code Enforcement Officer
Favorite Damascus thing: fishing
Marty is from Abingdon and graduated from Abingdon High School and Virginia Highlands Community College. He recently retired from law enforcement after 39 years with the Washington County Sheriff's Office. He has served in the Abingdon fire department for the past 45 years. His wife is from Damascus. He enjoys waterfowl hunting, fishing, and spending time outdoors.
code.enforcement@damascus.org

SHAWN PRICE, Police Officer
Favorite Damascus thing: fishing
Shawn is from Damascus. He has served the community for 21 years in the volunteer fire department, 18 years in EMS, and 7 years as an auxiliary volunteer for the police department. He began working for the Damascus Police Department full-time in January to fill a vacant position. Shawn enjoys hunting and fishing.
shawn.price@damascuspolice.com

TRAIL CENTER UPDATE

Later this year, the long-awaited Damascus Trail Center will officially open to the public! Developed through a partnership between the Town of Damascus and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), the Center will help visitors discover and enjoy regional recreation opportunities, promote local businesses, and highlight ways to become better stewards of the outdoors. Over the coming months, the ATC will build out the interior exhibits and work with the Town to renovate an on-site training facility.

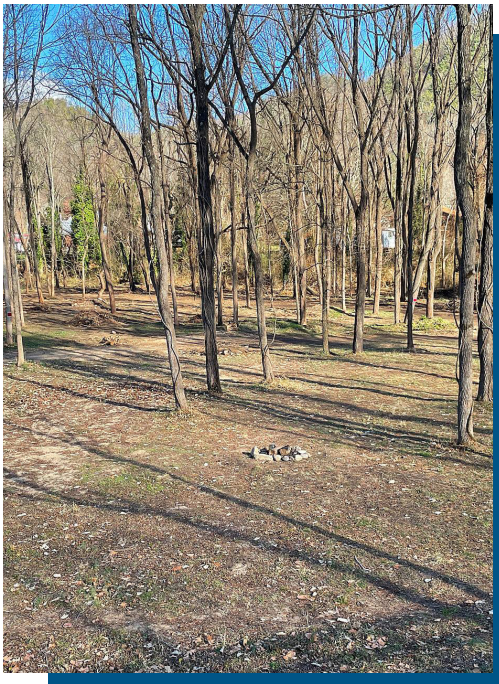
Beginning May 6, the ATC will host a pop-up visitor center Friday-Monday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This pop-up center will run through the summer to engage with visitors while interior renovations are completed.

Get involved!
If you would like to volunteer to be a part of the pop-up center team, please contact the Damascus Trail Center Supervisor at DTCinfo@appalachiantrail.org.

DOG PARK UPDATE

The Damascus Dog Park is under development on a two acre, town-owned lot at the end of Whistlestop Road by Trestle 17 on the Creeper Trail. First, the area is being cleared of brush and leveled for fencing and grass seeding. Once complete, the dog park will include four sections: large dogs, small dogs, old dogs, and a single dog training area. The park will also include a parking area, gazebo, walking trail, and creek access. The development team plans to complete the dog park in phases, beginning with two fenced-in sections in Phase One.

Get involved!
1. Join the Damascus Dog Park Development Team group on Facebook.
2. Donate with GoFundMe or by mailed check to Susan Seymore, 19332 Country Drive Abingdon VA 24211.
3. Sponsor the park! Become a sponsor of the gazebo, benches, sanitary stations, and more.



THE FIRE DEPARTMENT NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The Damascus Volunteer Fire Department is raising funds to repair two firetrucks and purchase updated equipment for an additional two trucks. Engine 145 has a broken pump and Rescue Engine 141 needs critical engine repairs. Estimated repairs total $20,000 and equipment updates will cost another $60,000.

The fire department operates with volunteers and covers a large area of 110 square miles, to include the eastern 27 miles of the Virginia Creeper Trail, from Whitetop to Alvarado. There are no fees for their services and they are only partially supported by government funding. To operate effectively, they rely on donations from individuals and organizations.

Donations are tax-deductible.
No processing fee.

Donate Online

OR

Mail a Check to
Damascus Volunteer Fire Dept.
PO Box 426
Damascus VA 24236

DAMASCUS BUSINESS GROUP

Businesses are encouraged to enroll or renew membership as soon as possible to be included in the town's 2022 tear-off tourism map. Membership is $50 and also includes promotion on the town tourism website (VisitDamascus.org), partnership with other businesses, and periodic meetings and email updates focused on local business support. The Damascus Business Group (DBG) formed in 2014 to promote communication between the private sector and the local government of Damascus in the effort to build a stronger overall marketing capacity for the Town.

Email Tuesday at clerk@damascus.org to enroll or renew your membership with DBG.

DBG DAMASCUS BUSINESS GROUP

NEW BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

Appalachian Heritage Distillery opened in October 2021 to distill, bottle, and sell spirits. They currently offer vodka, gin, five-year bourbon, and 4-year rye whiskey. Their store-front includes a distillery, tasting room, and VA ABC Store. Father and son duo Tim and TC Nichols are the brains behind the operation. TC is the fourth generation of distillers in the family. They used to run the operation out of Bristol, TN before moving to Damascus.
Located at 110 W Laurel Ave
Website | Facebook | Instagram

Brinkwaters opened in September 2021 as a boutique short-stay vacation rental with thirteen rooms. Brinkwaters is owned by Eric and Emily Brinker and Trey Waters.
Located at 201 W Laurel Ave
Website | Facebook | Instagram

Discover Damascus opened in May 2021 and specializes in locally made crafts, gifts, and keepsakes of adventures in Damascus. The store is owned and run by John and Susan Coleman.
Located at 128 E Laurel Ave
Facebook

H2 Health opened their Damascus location in October 2021. They provide outpatient physical therapy for adults and pediatrics, with a hands-on approach and a team of experts in post-op rehab, sports medicine, and a balance and dizziness program.
Located at 744 N Beaver Dam Ave, Suite 3
Website | Facebook | Instagram | Twitter

Lady Di's B&B opened in May 2021 as a bed and breakfast with a hiker rate. It has a mix of private bedrooms and shared hostel-type rooms. Owner Dianne Seger (Lady Di) thru hiked the AT after retiring in 2019 and loved her time in Damascus during her hike. After finding the perfect space for a B&B, she sold her home in Minnesota and moved here.
Located at 217 Damascus Dr
Website | Facebook

Main Street Coffee and Cream opened in May 2021 and offers coffee, ice cream, sandwiches and more. Ralph Wilson owns the new coffee shop, as well as Damascus Diner and Dragonfly Inn. They will reopen in March 2022.
Located at 128 E Laurel Ave
Facebook | Instagram

Mojo's Trailside Cafe and Coffee House reopened in April 2021 with new owners, father and son team Robert Diggs Sr (Nelson) and Jr (Bobby). Nelson retired from the Navy and moved to Taylors Valley in 2015. Bobby has a background in restaurant management. They offer all day breakfast and coffee, as well as tacos, unique sandwiches, and pulled pork. Mojo's reopens for the season in March 2022.
Located at 331 Douglas Dr
Facebook | Instagram

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar,
2022 is set to be a busy year!

Get the latest event updates at:

Town Events Calendar
Town Facebook page
Town Instagram

February 11-12	Shop til You Drop at the Rock School
February 19	Bonfire Half Marathon at the Creeper Trail Cottages
February 26	Phil Lineberry Memorial Scholarship Bingo at HHS
March 3	Justin Foundation Auction at Rhea Valley Elem. School
April 9	Down the Mountain Marathon
April 15-16	Easter in the Park by One Way Ministries
April 23	Earth Day Event
May 7	Town-Wide Yard Sale
May 13-15	Appalachian Trail Days Festival
June 4	Dam Yeti 50 Miler
mid-June	Motorcycle Event
June 24-25	Iron Mountain 100K Bike Race
July 3	Independence Day Celebration
July 29-30	Creeper Trail Ride to End Cancer (CTREC)

Have an event you'd like to share? Email Julie at recreation.director@damascus.org to include your event in the quarterly newsletter and the events calendar on the website. Tag town accounts or send us a message on Facebook and Instagram to get your events shared on social media.

SEASONAL

May to July	**Pop-Up Events** at the Damascus Trail Center, Friday to Monday weekly
April to October	**Damascus Farmers Market** at Laurel Creek Park, Saturdays 9am to 12pm
June to October	**Beaverdam Jams** at the Town Park, Fridays monthly, dates TBD
June to August	**Damascus Town Pool**, open daily

COMING SOON!
TRAIL DAYS
MAY 13-15, 2022

Friendliest Town on the Appalachian Trail

SPONSORED BY:
HYPERLITE MOUNTAIN GEAR

VENDORS | FOOD | GEAR
LIVE MUSIC AT THE PARK
WORKSHOPS | LECTURES
AUCTION | HIKER PARADE
HIKING | BIKING | CAMPING

Since 1987, when Trail Days began, this event has become one of the most anticipated by the community, visitors, vendors, business owners, and hikers. Damascus looks forward to this week each year to continue to celebrate the Appalachian Trail and all the folks who love it.

More details coming soon at www.TrailDays.us

Shop 'Til You Drop!

VALENTINE'S EVENT

505 South Shady Avenue, Damascus, VA 24236

Friday, February 11th 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Rock School Auditorium	Saturday, February 12th 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Rock School Auditorium
LADIES ONLY Local Vendors on site for all your Valentine's needs! $10 CASH ENTRY FEE	*12:00 PM - 2:00 PM Book signing with Nancy Lamb Local Vendors on site for all your Valentine's needs! NO ENTRY FEE

BONFIRE half MARATHON

DAMASCUS, VIRGINIA

FEBRUARY 19

***Volunteers still needed for Saturday.**

Contact Buddy Albro for volunteer info:
buddyalbro@yahoo.com, 276-451-8342

Holston FFA's Annual Phil Lineberry Memorial Scholarship Bingo

FEBRUARY 26 , 2022

Hot Dog Supper 5:00 pm

BINGO 6:15 pm

All monies raised will directly benefit the Phil Lineberry Memorial Scholarship Fund!

Bingo Cards:
1-$8
2-$15

LOCATION: Holston High School 21308 Monroe Rd. Damascus, VA 24236

USED BIKE SALE

Used Bike Sale at Sundog Outfitter, 331 Douglas Dr. All bikes are cleaned up, checked by a mechanic and in good condition. We have the following sizes: 20" and 24" Kid's bikes, XS, SM, MD, LG and XL Adult bikes (both mountain and comfort bikes).
Come check out our bikes and take one for a test ride.

BOHO KNOTS
with Stephanie

LEARN THE ART OF MACRAMÉ!

Stephanie will start with the basics in this series of classes and gradually increase the difficulty with a variety of knots and designs for wall hangings, plant holders, outdoor treatments, and more.

DAMASCUS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Feb 23, 4pm
March 23, 4pm
April 27, 4pm
May 25, 4pm

Washington County PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

If you have any stories, information, or events that you would like to feature in the next issue of the Trail Town Tribune, please email Julie at recreation.director@damascus.org. The next newsletter will be published in early May.

NOTICES AND REMINDERS

Regularly Scheduled Meetings:
Meetings are located in Town Hall (unless otherwise noted)

Town Council Meeting – 1st Monday of each month at 7pm
Parks & Rec. / Trail Days Committee – 3rd Thursday of each month at 2pm (as called)
Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) – 4th Monday of each month at 6pm (as called)
Budget, Finance and Admin – Last Monday of each month at 7pm (as called)
Downtown Revitalization Team / Façade Committee – 1st Tuesday of each month at 6pm (as called)
Public Works Committee – 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5pm (as called)
Planning Commission – 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6pm (as called)
Damascus Business Group (DBG) – Quarterly (as called)

Find minutes, notices, council members, and more on the town website at www.Damascus.org.

Real Estate and Personal Property taxes are due on May 20 and November 20. Taxes may be paid in person with cash or check, or online by credit card or e-check. Payment may be made in person during business hours, in the after hours drop box at Town Hall, by mail, or online at www.Damascus.org. The town mailing address is PO Box 576, Damascus, VA 24236.

There are drop boxes available at Town Hall for flag retirement and old prescriptions. Stop by during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Project Updates

VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

Route 58 widening near Damascus (Washington County **January 2022**

Washington County

Project: Route 58 widening from 0.038-mile east of Route 708 (Bethel Road) to 0.278-mile east of Route 858 (Hollyfield Road), includes replacement of the bridge over the Creeper Trail and South Fork Holton River

Contractor: Kanawha Stone Company, Inc.
Project Manager Matt McPeek: (304) 514-1419

Estimated Cost: $42 Million

Project Start: Winter 2021
Completion Date: May 2024

Kanawha Stone Company will be performing tree clearing activities beginning January 26 that will create periodic delays along the Virginia Creeper Trail near the bridge over South Fork Holston River and the trail. The contractor will use flaggers to control trail traffic during work hours, which are typically 7 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

When clearing activities are underway adjacent to the Virginia Creeper Trail, be alert to flaggers directing trail traffic and the possibility of 15-30 minute delays.

The widening of Route 58 and replacement of the bridge will provide a modern and safe four-lane highway and will serve as the fourth and final phase of widening of Route 58 between Abingdon and Damascus.

If you have questions or concerns about the project, please reach out to Kanawha Stone Company Project Manager Matt McPeek via phone at (304) 514-1419 or via email at Matt.Mcpeek@kanawhastone.com.