

Cushaw Project Currents

1-7-14

FORVA Re-starts the Cushaw Project!

After a long, several years wait for the Glasgow access improvements to be completed, we have decided to move forward with our re-start for the Cushaw Project, the goal being a better take-out below Balcony. The Glasgow improvements are somewhat bogged down in bureaucratic red tape, but at least the way is clear to use the new put-in that is directly on the James.

First step: apply to DCR

The process set up by the legislature to apply for an at-grade crossing starts with a "Letter of Intent," which is really a form that calls for nine different subjects to be addressed. Then the application goes to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Jennifer Wampler is the point person at DCR. After DCR reviews the application, and if it is approved by DCR, it then goes to CSX.

Lock 14 is the first choice:

We are submitting a request for an at-grade crossing at Lock 14, which is a nice old historic canal lock in excellent shape. Much of it is covered with brush and needs work. Interested?

We plan to do a gravel road off Rt 501 that would run down to the track but not cross it. There will be parking at the top of the hill but only a turnaround at the bottom for loading boats.

CSX has argued liability, but has none:

Our last major work on this project was legislative. We added language to the Virginia code that made it crystal clear that railroads would be exempt from lawsuits if they allowed the public to cross their tracks. It remains to be seen if CSX has digested the new code and will recognize that liability issues are no more. Their lawyers will not likely accept this as it reduces their work load.

Cost of development?

We have estimated the cost of the project will be about \$200,000. Currently, we have \$165,000 in funds available from Dominion Power. So expect a major fundraising effort if we get the nod from CSX for the crossing.

Support Grows:

Our newest letter of support for the project comes from Friends of the Roanoke River, as of January 7, 2014. In February, we will solicit a support letter from the Botetourt County Blueway Committee. If you know of other organizations or companies that would do a letter, please let me know.

How to Help:

Contact Bill Tanger: Email address: bill.tanger@verizon.net. Home: 540-366-2228. Cell: 540-266-0237.