Tucker County Visits Damascus, Virginia

Project Connections

In June of 2017, trail project managers from partnering organizations in Tucker County, WV retreated to Damascus, VA for an educational and inspirational 3 day Redevelopment Expert Exchange. The Tucker County Partners are working to develop the Allegheny Highlands Trail which spans Thomas to Elkins, WV and divides US Forest Service and private property. The area’s rural landscape and tourist appeal provide unique opportunities for trail centered development to boost the area’s economy and identity.

Development on and around the Virginia Creeper trail, which connects the rural Town of Damascus to surrounding economic centers, is a workable case study for Allegheny Highlands Trail initiatives, with clear parallels demonstrating how trail focused development can strengthen area tourism, economy, and public health.

Trip Activities

Visiting partners:

- Connected with several hosting partners associated with the Virginia Creeper Trail, the Town of Damascus, the Southwest Virginia initiative, Heartwood, and the Crooked Road
- Experienced the area’s major tourist attraction, a 17-mile downhill bike ride on the Virginia Creeper Trail
- Went on a walking tour of the town, led by Damascus town management, where the group discussed the town’s strengths and issues, as well as plans for future development
- Spent an evening with leaders associated with Southwest Virginia, a local branding initiative promoting the area as an outdoor recreation and tourism hub

Take Aways

- Private / Public Partnership leads to synergistic development.
- Interesting, beginner friendly trail attractions bring tourists.
- Marketing a route that connects points of interest attracts tourists through a region.