



**Oak Ridge MST Monthly Meeting  
January 27, 2026  
Minutes**

**Attendees:** Bill Bruce, Anne Steele, Jeff Richter, Martha Pittman, Mike Kimmel, Moses Perry, Frank Campione, Jim Harton, Stephanie Ferrell, Joel Deaton

**Project updates**

**Joel:** trails seem to be in good condition. There is one big tree that has fallen that needs to be watched as it is starting to deteriorate and get closer to the ground. None of the sawyers have a large blade to take care of it when the time comes to remove it. Bill Bruce is going to check with the town staff to see if they have a chainsaw large enough.

The trails at the Cascades are in good shape except for several trees down on the upper loop trail. We will add it to the list of items to be taken care of during the next workday.

The trail leading from the Scuba Tools parking lot also needs attention from the sawyers and others to help clean up the trail. Joel would like to take the sawyers into that trail and cut through a group of trees that have fallen in a clump because it will make for a better trail experience.

**Trail Naming**

During the month of December, a survey was carried out to get input on name options for the two new trails on the east side of Oak Ridge. We had 39 votes and the winners were “Craggy Creek” for the trail that starts behind Scuba Tools and “Carriage Trace Loop” for the spur trail.

**Scout Update**

Jackson Heltsley continues to work on the interpretive trail project along the Headwaters Trail. He has provided his research to Mike Kimmel and they discussed the signage and what is needed for each sign. Progress is being made but with his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday quickly approaching, the MST committee will work with him to move the project forward.

**Signs**

Bill Bruce is going to circle back with the Parks staff on the “Dogs Must Be on Leash” signs for trails after reports of off-leash dogs on trails. Frank noted that, in addition to issues with

dog waste on the trail, cars frequently park on neighbors' yards in Rivergate so that people can use the trails. Suggested signs at the corner of Haw River Road and Pepper Road and Rivergate and Haw River Road. Sign wording to include "Be Respectful Of Neighbors, Do Not Park on Grass". Bill is going to check with the Parks staff on what signs they may have in their shop. We will revisit this topic and any updates during the February meeting.

### **Ashford Easement**

The Planning & Zoning Board held a public hearing about closing the Ashford Easement during their meeting on Thursday, January 22. P&Z voted unanimously to keep the easement open. The vote now goes to the Town Council for a final vote during the February Town Council meeting on February 5.

### **Grants Discussion**

No updates

### **MST Updates**

**Joel:** The Friends of the MST Annual Gathering sign-up is open. It will be held in the mountains this year. Details are available on the MST website.

Joel submitted the volunteer hours to Friends of the MST for their yearly report. There were 499 reported volunteer hours submitted for 2025. The MST sent a thank you letter to the trail volunteers. Stephanie to share with the MST e-mail list.

A workday is needed as soon as possible to fix the damage caused by the beaver dams on the Headwater Trails. Not many people will be needed. More people will be needed for the work on the Scuba Tools trail.

\*Workday dates\*

- Monday, February 9; 9-12 – Headwaters Trail workday, meet at Linville Trailhead
- Saturday, March 7; 9-12 – Scuba Tools, multiple crews starting at Grey Fox and Scuba Tools -bigger crew needed for this workday

**Martha:** The state parks has approved the MST route from Hanging Rock to Danbury. The new western terminus in Cherokee is going to be finished by the Gathering.

### **Manager's Report**

The Piedmont Legacy Trails Summit is scheduled for March 5 at the Salem Lake Marina. Registration is open and Bill will forward the details to the committee. If committee members are interested in attending, the town will cover the costs.

The Town Council's CIP workshop will be on February 11 starting at 10 in Town Hall. A rep from MST is typically at the workshop but we can also send recommendations to Bill to be distributed to the Town Council. For the last 6-7 years, the MST committee budget has been around \$35,000 to use as projects arise.

Construction has really started on Bandera Farms Park. Estimated completion/open date is November 2025.

### **Community Outreach**

Anne will be contacting Genevieve about posts about the parking situation in Rivergate and the off-leash dog situation.

Next e-mail that goes out to volunteer list, include a blurb to make sure that everyone on the list would like to stay on the list.

The next meeting will be on **February 24**.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Stephanie Ferrell