

# OH BIKE MINI-NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2021

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### Message from the President



Dear OHBTC Members:

We just finished our major Labor Day Picnic Ride and it was whopping success, thanks to all of you! Your volunteering and ride turnout was greatly appreciated. We also had some new members that joined. We will try to do one more event this year, if we can. Once again thanks for your help and support of the club.

Please remember you can always join our monthly OHBTC monthly meetings.

Until next time, I will see you on and down the road!  
Donaro Gardner

### News from the Trails - SW Virginia, NW Georgia, and NE Alabama (by Ron Altemus, Trail Ride Coordinator)

In September 2019, the organizers of Bike Florida announced they would be taking a hiatus for 2020. Gene Villiva and I had ridden the previous 4 years, enjoying an end of winter break in sunny and warm Florida. We decided to create our own Bike Florida for the end of March 2020, and subsequently made a number of reservations for our intended dates. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted those plans and we rescheduled to September 2020, then again to March 2021, and finally, having run out of options to change dates, for September 2021.

Our plan was to ride a number of rail trails while driving down to Florida. We would then spend a week in Florida riding trails there. Our routing took us to trails in Virginia, Georgia, and Alabama. After leaving Virginia, tropical storm Nicholas threatened our riding on a daily basis, but we were able to ride each day, as follows.

## Virginia Creeper Trail



The Creeper trail runs from Abingdon to Whitetop Mountain just off I-81 in southwest Virginia. 34 miles in total length, both trailheads drop down to Damascus, which is the midpoint of the trail. The Creeper trail is packed stone best ridden with at least 32mm tires. Sections of the trail pass through lightly populated areas, working farms (with spring-loaded cow gates at points on the trail), and heavily forested woodlands. Damascus sits on the Laurel River and the trail runs beside it for many miles at its lowest point.

The elevation change for the Abingdon>Damascus section never exceeds a 1.5% grade. On the other end, Whitetop is at 3600' while Damascus sits at 1900'. Even so, the maximum grade appears to be under 3%. I say "appears" because we took a shuttle up to Whitetop and then rode downhill all the way to Damascus. Riding through old growth forests, we experienced over a 10-degree temperature drop from Whitetop.

Damascus has several eateries along with a number of shuttle services, making it very convenient to divide the trail into two segments, as we did for our trip. Having ridden the trail in spring, summer, and fall, I can attest that each season brings its own delights.

## Silver Comet Trail

Extending from Smyrna, Georgia, on its eastern end to the Alabama state line on the west, the Silver Comet is a jewel of a rail trail. Extending over 62 miles, it is a completely paved concrete trail, 12' wide, and almost all flat. It passes through suburbia in the east to forests and fields for almost its entire length. Near Cedartown, GA, there are some steep climbs (my Garmin said 14% for one of them) but that is the anomaly.

The trail goes through a tunnel at Brushy Mountain but the tunnel is well lit and not especially long. It is nothing compared to the Paw Paw tunnel on the C&O canal, and while I have no direct experience with tunnels on the GAP trail, I imagine it would pale in comparison to those.





There are convenient facilities spaced along the trail as far west as Rockmart, nowhere near as many heading to the Alabama state line. As we were riding during the middle of the week, with daily forecasts of light rain, we didn't see many other trail users.

**Chief Ladiga Trail**

A continuation of the Silver Comet trail in Alabama, the Chief Ladiga trail goes west from the state line through the towns of Piedmont, Jacksonville, and Weaver, before ending just short of Anniston, Alabama. Currently almost 34 miles in length, it is hoped that in the next two years, it will be extended into downtown Anniston.



The trail itself is paved asphalt, 10' wide, and much flatter than the Silver Comet. The first leg to Piedmont goes through heavily forested woodlands giving way to farming and views of the southern Appalachian Mountains.



Piedmont itself is a town in need of revival but it is the community that was responsible for the creation of the trail. From Piedmont to just beyond Weaver, the trail basically runs parallel to a highway but there is a continual tree line that both muffles the noise and view of passing vehicles. Facilities/rest rooms along the trail are spaced a bit further apart than on the Silver Comet, and there are no opportunities for replenishing food supplies.

Due to the constant threat of rain while in Alabama, we rode the trail in various segments and rarely saw any other riders until our Saturday ride from Piedmont to the Georgia line. On that day, we saw probably a dozen riders. The Chief Ladiga is a great trail and coupled with the Silver Comet, allows the adventurous trail rider to traverse 96 miles without having to worry about vehicular traffic except at grade crossings.

Next month I'll report on our adventures riding some of Florida's rail trails.

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## Oxon Hill Bike and Trail Club Board Meeting Minutes

<b>Date/Time</b>	September 13, 2021, 5 PM
<b>Attendance</b>	President Donaro Gardner, Vice-President Janell Saunders, Secretary Jane Hudnall, Road Captain Barbara Haney. Board members: Leslie Tierstein, George Martin, Walt Roscello (absent: Ron Altemus, Joan Oppel). Club members: Michael Saizan, Randy Schoch, Sherwood Byers, Jessica Hirschhorn, Jim Hudnall, Harry Kidd, Carl Hattery.

**Treasurer's Report** – Ron Altemus' written report showed the year-to-date income - \$4,650 (Membership and Jersey sales) and expenses - \$6,377.22.

**Minutes** from August Meeting – Jane Hudnall

**Membership Report** – Jim Hudnall - There are 419 members. Jim will contact recently lapsed members.

## Old Business:

- Evaluation of Labor Day Ride and Picnic
  - Ride leaders – 26 -C Randy Schoch, 26-CC Janell Sanders, 37-B Donaro Gardner, 37-CC Ellen Goodwin and Mike Saizan, 50-A,B Walt Roscello, 63- A Sherwood Byers, 63-AA Blake Altman did an outstanding job. Ron Altemus was unable to lead the Trail Ride because of mechanical problems, but got the group started.
  - Routes – The routes worked well. A cyclist was bitten by a dog at the intersection of Stuckey and Mason Springs Roads. It was suggested that future routes avoid Stuckey. George recommended the use of “Halts” spray to discourage threatening dogs.
  - Food – The hot dogs, tomato sandwiches, potato chips, cookies, iced tea, and lemonade – great!
  - Volunteers – Special recognition to Jackie Schoch, Wally Huie, Pat Colvin, Jessica Hirschhorn, George Martin, Sarah Clements, Theresa Jackson, Carolyn Graves, Carl Hattery and Dani Villiva.
  - The board voted to give a donation of \$200.00 to the Town of Indian Head for allowing the club to use the restrooms in the pavilion.
- Sherwood Byers and Jessica Hirschhorn reported that the Lapp Ice Cream Ride went well.
- Sherwood reported the GAP Tour to and from Pittsburg started off with problems but was enjoyable.

## New Business:

- Approved Nancy Avitabile as assistant treasurer.
- Ride leader jerseys for members leading 6 or more rides: Ellen Goodman, Harry Kidd.
- A discussion on increasing dues to cover club expenses was tabled until January.
- Update on **Richmond-Williamsburg Tour**, Oct. 9 –11 -. Sherwood Byers will lead a trip from Richmond to Williamsburg, a ride in the Williamsburg area and then a return to Richmond. Walt Roscello will assist. The board approved increasing the number of riders to 25.
- Future events: the annual meeting in February, club-supported rides and all-class club events. New coordinators will be needed for the Rural Legacy Ride and the Indian Head 100. Leslie Tierstein will announce the need for coordinators for the supported rides in the newsletter.
- A nominating committee is needed to present a slate of officers at the annual meeting.
- A check box “I have been fully vaccinated” will be added to the registration form.
- Ride leaders should duplicate - not write over - the ride template when posting rides.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, October 11, 5:00 pm, via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Hudnall, Secretary

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## An Impromptu, Informal 10-Day Tour (by Walt Roscello)

When I announced on the club email list that I was on my bike, heading home on the last day of a ten-day tour, a number of people asked about my route and experiences. So:

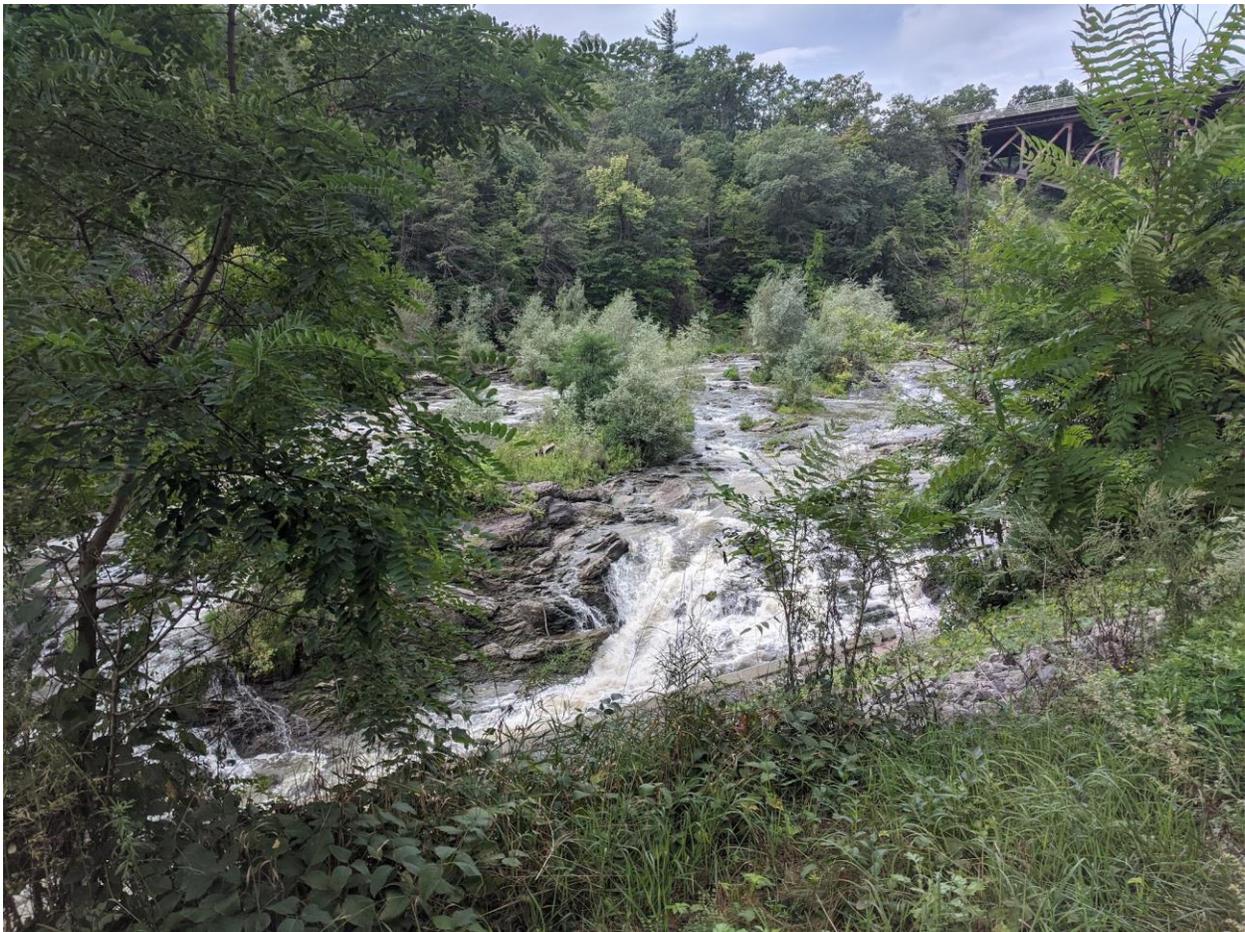
The tour happened when I combined an urge to explore and insufficient constraints with a two-day event leaving from New York City. In this case “how do I get to and from NYC?” turned into

“I should visit my mother in Albany, and they just opened the Empire State Trail (<https://empiretrail.ny.gov/>), so I could ride the trail to NYC” and “I’ve wanted to try the route from Lancaster to York on the old Susquehanna bridge, so I can just ride over there and then home from Baltimore.”

Thus, a two-day weekend event had a different four-day ride tacked onto either end of it, making a planned ten days of biking plus the trip up to Albany.

In brief, the route was this:

- Use the designated and marked **Empire State Trail** to ride from Albany to NYC.
- Then ride **the East Coast Greenway** (ECG) route in New Jersey and Pennsylvania on the organized ECG fundraiser ride.
- From Philadelphia, head west on the **Schuylkill River Trail**.
- Use **Adventure Cycling’s Atlantic Coast** route to York (this is also Pennsylvania’s Bike Route S). T
- Take the **North Central Rail Trail** to Hunt Valley, north of Baltimore
- Having rejoined the ECG, use the **ECG through Baltimore and Annapolis** until I got to Patuxent River Road where I can take familiar roads home.



For details, here’s my article about the tour.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eb02dGAXI4RVkNc766RlguzGbd67HMzQ56dmud4ontl/edit?usp=sharing>

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## Ride Leaders Wanted

OHBTC has always had an excellent and very dedicated nucleus of ride leaders. They are the backbone of our club, filling out the schedule week after week with creative ideas to keep us all riding. This summer we've been fortunate to have a few outstanding new additions to our faithful group of leaders. The new leaders may have been reluctant to take the first step, but after they became regulars we could count on consistently. This is especially commendable given the many Covid-caused obstacles in their way: the complications and uncertainty of planning and leading group activities during the pandemic. They, as well as our veteran leaders, really stepped up and kept us thriving as a club.

Now that summer 2021 is officially behind us, it's time to appeal to all of you who enjoy our rides but have never led one, to decide that 2022 will be your year. Think over what you liked about a ride or a ride leader. Come up with your own ideas on where or how to lead. Or follow the example of a favorite leader and then grab a route from the club library. Ask a friend, perhaps but not necessarily a veteran leader, to co-lead if you're not ready to strike out on your own. If you like riding throughout the fall and winter, it's a good time to begin if you want to start with a smaller group. Ask any ride leader, coordinator, or board member for advice or help if you have questions. We're here to support you as you take that step and become one of the people who help keep our club vibrant.

You'll be asking yourself why you waited so long. We can't wait to welcome you and to see your name appear on the calendar as a new ride leader!