

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
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[www.wataugavalleynrhs.org](http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org)



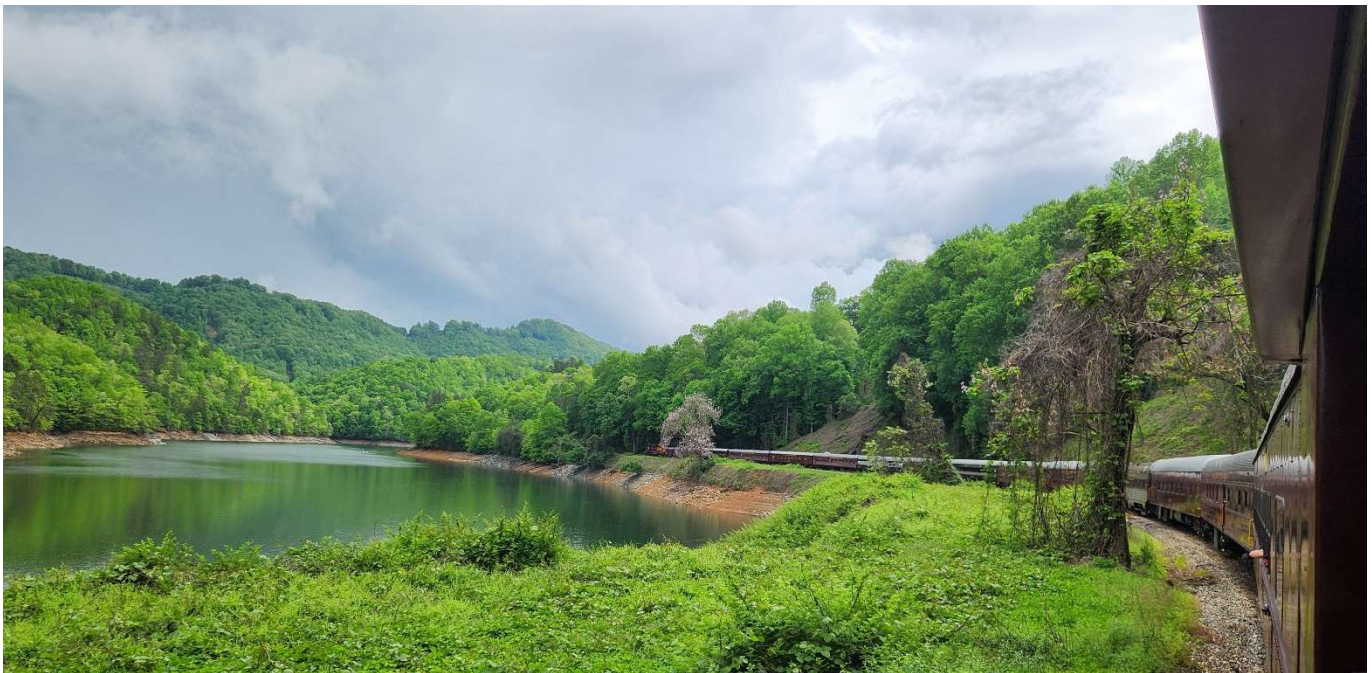
Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Volume 44 No. 6

June 2024

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Our Spring Excursion on the May 4<sup>th</sup> Great Smoky Mountains Railroad was a big success. With over 825 people on the train, everyone had a great time on a Spring Day as the skies cleared just in time for a beautiful trip. This photo finds our 22-car train winding its way along the Nantahala River. More action photos can be found on pages 6 and 7.

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## *May 20<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting*

Due to the regularly-scheduled date of our next General Membership falling on Memorial Day this year, **this month's meeting will be held one week earlier on Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024.** The time and location remain the same at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). For this month's program we will be treated to a video on the Southern Pacific Railroad's 4-8-8-2 "Cab Forward" locomotive steaming over the famous Donner Pass. Bring a friend out and enjoy a great evening of railroading.

## *Member Notes*

Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers: Bob Hand, Fred Phofl, Gary Price, Lois Tilley, Jack Maloney, and Art Devoe.

If you know of a member that needs a card, thoughts for various concerns, or to request that one of our members or family be reported for various concerns in the *Whistle Stop*, email a request to [wataugavalley.membership@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley.membership@gmail.com).

### **DINNER ON THE DINER CANCELLED**

Due to so much mechanical work on our cars, the 100 and *Moultrie*, it has been decided to cancel this year's "Dinner on the Diner" event; we will resume next year.

### **NEW EXCURSION MAILING LIST**

WVRHS&M has put together a new mass email list for people to get advance notification of future excursions. Anyone interesting in getting on the advance list, please email your information to [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

### **PHOTOS FOR WHISTLE STOP**

Several members are wanting to contribute photos for the Whistle Stop, please send your photos to our editor, Fred Waskiewicz, at [whistlestop.editor@gmail.com](mailto:whistlestop.editor@gmail.com). Fred is not hard-nosed, but does ask that your photos are well-lit, balanced, and in focus. Well, maybe he is – a little.

### **PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2024**

The Program Committee continues to seek programs for 2024 General Membership meetings. Please notify us at the next meeting or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) if you are interested in providing a program. Also, we are looking for speakers if you know someone who would come and present a railroad-related program. And, as always, we're looking for DVD and slide shows.

### **A FEW WORDS ON FUTURE EXCURSIONS ...**

We hope that on future GSMR excursions we will be able to offer more bus seats to passengers from Johnson City, allowing more WVRHS&M members the opportunity to host GSMR trips. The next GSMR excursion will be September 14<sup>th</sup>, powered by steam.

## *Upcoming WVRHS&M Clinchfield Southend Tour*

**A FEW SEATS ARE LEFT!** Members of the Watauga Valley Railroad Museum are invited to attend the Clinchfield Southend Tour on Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. We have rented two 15 passenger vans to explore the Clinchfield right of way. An itinerary is attached to the end of this newsletter. The trip will be led by Thomas Pittman; the cost to cover the van rental, insurance and fuel is \$40 per person. We have very limited seating for everyone in the two vans so get your check in the mail to Watauga Valley Railroad Museum, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37650 ASAP. Rest room breaks are planned as well as a lunch break at the Countryside BBQ in Marion, NC. **PLEASE NOTE:** We will be driving on some curvy roads; if you get car sick, this could be issue for you in the van. If you like the Clinchfield Railroad, you are sure to enjoy this trip.

## *Mechanical Department Report*

### *by Art Devoe*

Looks like summer is knocking on our door and we can finally get some work done as the weather has been good to the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team, permitting a lot of productive working days at the yard over the last several weeks. If you would like to help at the Jonesborough Coach Yard on Tuesdays between 9am to 5pm or Saturdays 9am to 12noon, please call the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

### ROLLING STOCK

**“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400):** getting roof painted.



**“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539)** and **“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500):** receiving upgrades. At left, contractors are reapplying lettering over the 539's freshly-painted sides.

**“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351):** ready for its next assignment.

**“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100):** major work has been ongoing with the 100 - table repair and generator work along with painting the roof.

## *Monitor CSX and NS Radio Activity*

Listed below you will find access to radio activity to all of the action on CSX (ex-Clinchfield) and Norfolk Southern with coverage from Kermit, VA to Spartanburg, SC. Hats off and thanks to Watauga Valley members Bob Mushet and Thomas Pittman for making these links possible. Happy Railfanning!

CSX HOLSTON MTN FEED - [www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/41446](http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/41446)

NS HOLSTON MTN FEED [www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/35435](http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/35435)

CSX TOECANE FEED - [www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/42828](http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/42828)

CSX SPRUCE PINE FEED [www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/41668](http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/41668)

CSX LYNN GAP FEED [www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/42775](http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/42775) (CLINCHFIELD LOOPS)

CSX MARION NC FEED [www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/32310](http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/32310)

CSX BOSTIC NC FEED [www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/33332](http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/33332)

CSX SPARTANBURG SC FEED [www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/41316](http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/41316)

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**Train Trivia:** Historically, if a railroad station was deemed a “coupon station,” this meant: A.) a station that could sell tickets at a discount; B.) a station that could sell tickets prior to a trip; C.) a station that could sell interline tickets. Answer on page 5.



## *Chuckey Depot / Museum*

Problems arose at the Chuckey Depot when the air conditioning went down and we had to close for nearly two weeks, but repairs have been made and we have reopened for visitors!

The next host training session for the Chuckey Depot will be this summer. If you would like to get involved and volunteer at the depot/museum one day a month, call our office at (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) to get your name on the training list. We are in need of more hosts since the hours of the depot will be extended during the summer months

### **RAIL CAMERAS AT THE CHUCKEY DEPOT**

You can hear and see all the action on the NS A Line and on the former Clinchfield (CSX) by visiting the Virtual Railfan Cam at the Chuckey Depot. We are pleased to announce that those cameras have now been upgraded with night lighting, allowing viewing terrific night viewing (most helpful to those who work during the day). To access the cameras, go to <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org> or <https://www.youtube.com/> and type "Jonesborough Rail Cam." You can also see the camera on the WCYB-TV weather show.

## *From the Vault ...*



Mike Tilley sent along this photo which presents something of a mystery. It is an excursion of sorts powered by ET&WNC RS-3 #210. The cars are not the original excursion cars, those having been scrapped long before. The "ET&WNC RR" banners on the car sides appear to be temporary; could this have been an employee event? The timeframe is 1970 and the location is "Cedar Grove," roughly placing it a few miles west of Elizabethton. Any information shedding light on this mystery would be appreciated.

## *In the News ...*

### *NS Survives Proxy Battle*

[*Railway Age*] The votes from Norfolk Southern's May 9<sup>th</sup>, 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting Shareholders have been tabulated and the results are clear. Following a months-long proxy battle launched by activist investor Ancora Holdings Group and punctuated by harsh rhetoric and personal attacks, 10 of Norfolk Southern's existing Board members remain in place. Ancora won three seats. President and CEO Alan Shaw will not be replaced. Nor will Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer John Orr.

For complete story go to <https://tinyurl.com/msc595dp>.

### *Amtrak Service Delayed to Christiansburg*

[David McGee, *Bristol Herald Courier*] Passenger rail service to the New River Valley has been pushed back to at least 2028 and potential changes there could impact extending service to Bristol. The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority notified stakeholders in the New River Valley in late January of the delay. Amtrak service from Roanoke to the greater New River Valley area was originally proposed by 2025 or 2026.

The next step, as it has been for some time, is determining the location of a train station for the New River Valley. This phase of the project is now estimated to cost between \$360 million and \$950 million, depending on which location is chosen.

The authority is expected to select from one of three options.

1. A site on Cinnabar Road, which follows U.S. Route 460 in Christiansburg, is forecast to cost \$366 million and allow service to begin as soon as the second quarter of 2028. This site avoids having the train pass through the Merrimac Tunnel, which must undergo substantial safety improvements to facilitate regular passenger service.
2. A site near the New River Valley Mall is expected to cost \$785 million, which would include connector track and require using the mile-long tunnel. It would delay service starting until the second quarter of 2030.
3. The third option includes a temporary platform on Cinnabar Road and a later one built at the mall site. It carries a \$951 million price tag with service starting to the platform by mid-2028.

For the complete story, go to <https://tinyurl.com/bdzkwcdc>.

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**Train Trivia answer:** C.) A coupon station was one that could sell interline tickets, which came in multiple "coupons" depending on the number of railroads to be used. Not every station could handle this kind of function, since it required a considerably more extensive file of tariffs plus some expertise in constructing a rate. [source: *RAILROAD.NET*; ED. NOTE: The Clinchfield had several along its route.]



# *Display in the Block*

*By Les Billings*

Hope everyone is having a good Spring and looking forward to a good Summer. This month's "Display in the Block" will cover our Excursion my wife and I worked on May 4<sup>th</sup> at the Great Smokey Mountain Railroad. This was my 5<sup>th</sup> time as a bus host, and I enjoyed it each time. Even though we had a little rain, well maybe a lot of rain just after we unloaded the buses, it did let up and all had a good enjoyable trip.



[Above] Before the monsoon set in, I was able to get a shot of 2335, a GP38-2, that was going to lead us on today's trip. We then proceeded to get a bagel, at the Depot Snack Bar and wait out the rain. A real gully washer.



[Above] Loading had begun with a few sprinkles left over.

[Below] The RR.' s F-Unit under the shed as we left the station.







[Above] GSMR 2335 pulling us up the gorge towards the Nantahala Outdoor Center

[Below] It is always enjoyable to see the rafters going down the river. One of the days we will need to get a group together and do the rafting.



[Left] This nice little waterfall is at the outdoor center and can be photographed better once your stopped on the return layover.



[Above] After we stopped for the layover, I walked to the back of the train, the front end as we return, and took a shot of this neat caboose. I would like to take a ride in it someday.



[Left] Well, we have arrived back to the depot after a nice ride. There is still a little construction going on, next to the depot as you can see. Then ack to the buses for our trip back to Johnson City.



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**TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL**



Whistle Stop

**WATAUGA VALLEY CLINCHFIELD SOUTHEND TOUR**  
**Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**  
**Itinerary**

- 7:00 a.m. Depart the Chuckey Depot, 110 S. Second St, Jonesborough, TN.
- 9:30-9:45 Spruce Pine Depot
- 9:45-10:00 Drive via Altapass Road to CC&O Caboose on Halltown Road, view Schoolhouse Bridge, Mitchell Lumber, Flotation, Toe River Siding.
- 10:00-10:15 Drive to Altapass, view ex-Henredon Spur, view Ridge Tunnel and ex-Wye Site.
- 10:15-10:45 Drive to Blue Ridge Parkway "North Cove" and "Loops" overlooks to view the Loops.
- 10:45-11:15 Drive Orchard and Pepper's Creek Rd, view Ridge, Camp Two, Baxter, Old Road through Sevier view ex-American Thread Spur trestle.
- 11:15-12:00 Drive via Yancey Road towards Marion, view Catawba River Viaduct, Marion site/Clinchcross, Southern Depot and SCL Caboose, Moodytown.
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch at Countryside BBQ, Marion.
- 1:00-1:45 Drive to Bostic Yard via Thermal/Box Creek Road. View 2 ex-CCC/Southern SB wooden trestles, Thermal Siding.
- 1:45-2:15 Bostic Yard.
- 2:15-2:45 Drive to Cliffside Power, passing Thermal Belt RR, SCL Caboose in Bostic, ex-Southern SB Bridge over Clinchfield.
- 2:45-3:15 Drive to Chesnee via Broad River Viaduct (viewed from 221), view Chesnee Depot.
- 3:15-3:45 Drive to Spartanburg Yard.
- 3:45 p.m. Return to Jonesborough.