

Fluvanna Heritage Trail Foundation
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Fluvanna Heritage Trail Celebrates Its 10th Year

Ten years ago, a small group of Fluvanna citizens came together to seek permission from Fluvanna County to build a trail system at the recently purchased Pleasant Grove. The idea for a trail system at Pleasant Grove came from members of the Fluvanna County Historical Society and the Economic Development Commission. Julie King became the early leader of this group and worked to broaden support for the concept. “The Heritage Trail ten years later is a phenomenal success and is much loved by the people of this county. So many citizens contributed to the early efforts to get the trail built. It really was a community effort,” said Julie King in marking the anniversary of the trail’s founding.

The Heritage Trail at Pleasant Grove was carefully planned in conjunction with the county staff preparing long range plans for the property. Using land that was either too steep for future building sites or in the flood plain, the Heritage Trail group planned a trail system that ran along the bluff above the Rivanna River. Much of the original lay out of the trail system was done by Woody Cumbo of Bremono. Volunteer crews, made up of dozens of citizens, spent many months clearing the river bluff trail and planning for the location of trailheads and access. Within a matter of about six months, the river bluff trail was cleared and ready for use.

The early advisory board to the Heritage Trail then decided to become a non-profit corporation and to join forces with the county in planning future development of the trail system at Pleasant Grove. The Fluvanna Heritage Trail Foundation became the new organization dedicated to providing recreational opportunities for all Fluvanna citizens. It was at this time that Red Pulliam joined the Foundation’s Board and took on the responsibility of supervising our volunteer efforts. The first transportation enhancement grant was drafted for VDOT’s approval with the county agreeing to pay the match. This resulted in the adoption of a trail master plan which included not only the Pleasant Grove sections but also new trails in Palmyra. With this first grant, the Julie King Sandy Beach trail was built at Pleasant Grove providing the first handicapped accessible trail in the county. The grant also stabilized the Historical Society’s Palmyra mill and built the Society’s Village Park next to the Palmyra Post Office.

The next phase of the master plan called for the purchase of the rail bed of the old Virginia Airline Railroad in Palmyra. The Fluvanna Heritage Trail Foundation purchased the old right of way in 2003, cleared the trail and opened it to the public in early 2004. the Foundation worked with Fluvanna County to provide access to the new trail through county property. This trail, the first wholly owned by the Foundation, is a popular trail providing spectacular vistas of the Rivanna River.

The Heritage Trail Foundation also cooperated with the county in developing plans for the restoration of the summer kitchen at the Pleasant Grove House for use as a new trailhead and museum. The restoration of the summer kitchen was completed in 2005 and will be opened as a trailhead and museum in June 2007 with attractive displays about the trail and the history of Pleasant Grove and transportation along the Rivanna River. The Foundation worked with the Historical Society on the design of the replacement bridge over the Rivanna in Palmyra, and the new span now under construction includes both a separate Heritage Trail pedestrian walk and three pedestrian overlooks.

Current projects include the completion of a loop trail connecting the Heritage Rail Trail to the Historical Society's mill site and providing access to the new bridge from Pleasant Grove. The Foundation is also working with the county on restoration of the Pleasant Grove House and plans for the western trailhead. "We are very close to completing almost every part of the original master plan for the Heritage Trail. I don't think many realize how unique it is to have such a cooperative effort between government and various private non-profits to the benefit of our citizens. The Fluvanna Heritage Trail is now a part of the fabric of life in Fluvanna County and is obviously loved by the people of the county and the region," said Marvin Moss, president of the Fluvanna Heritage Trail Foundation.