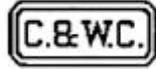




# Savannah Valley Railroad Trail

SVRR



## SVRRT volunteers clear brush from old RR bed for hiking trail

by Bob Stockton (appeared in McCormick Messenger October 29, 2009)

A hearty band of more than a dozen workers showed up to clear brush last Saturday from what they hope will be the Savannah Valley Rails to Trails (SVRRT) project from Barksdale Ferry Road opposite McCormick County Club up to Willington and maybe beyond.

"This is the first physical progress on the project after two years of conceiving, organizing and all the other behind the scenes preparation for this," said Frank Clayton of Savannah Lakes Village.

Clayton and another Villager, Don Norton, conceived the project, explored how to make it happen, networked with local and state authorities and are applying for grants to turn the old railroad bed from McCormick to Willington into a walking and biking trail. They have been holding occasional meetings at the Clemson Extension Office in McCormick.

Participants in the project include County Councilman Bernie Hamby, George Selfridge of the Plum Branch Yacht Club, Elyse Benson of the Ninety Six District Resource Conservation and Development Department, and Wallace Wood, retired Clemson Extension officer. The project has the support of many local and state organizations and officials.

"We had a terrific work day on Saturday, and participants showed up with four-wheelers, chain saws and a front-end loader," said Clayton. "It's very gratifying to see real physical progress after all the background work we've done."

The trail follows the road bed of the old C & WC Railroad from Charleston to Anderson begun in 1885. The Interstate Commerce Commission approved discontinuing rail service in 1978, and the South Carolina Department of Commerce purchased the roadway in 1983. The idea for a recreational trail began in the mid-1990s. It is to be open to just hikers and bikers; no motorized vehicles.

Clayton, Norton, Benson and Wood were present to pitch in with the brush clearing, and they were joined by another half-dozen workers from Savannah Lakes Village. Shortly after work began, the group added Pete Joslin, whose home adjoins the land where this first portion of the road bed extends up to route 7.

"This is just terrific," Joslin said. "I used to play here as a boy, and it's just great to see this come to life again. You people from the Village are just wonderful."

Phil Kinzer drove his front-end loader up and down the road bed moving logs from trees other workers had downed. Brad Allen, Stu Whipple, Wood and their chain saws took care of the big trees, and other workers with hand saws and clippers took care of smaller saplings and branches.

"It was not what I expected," Whipple said. "I had no idea that the roadbed had been abandoned for that long and was so overgrown. It was a lot of work, but very satisfying."

Clayton is hopeful that his grant application will get a favorable ruling from the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department. He and Norton are hoping for \$120,000. Most of that money is for a trestle to go over a cove of water on the road bed's route up to Willington. The trestle is located in a particularly beautiful area of the proposed trail and is expected to be a major attraction.

Other attractions are the Badwell Cemetery (being restored), the Huguenot Monument and Willington on the Way.

Folks wishing information re: donating to the project or about the next work day are asked to contact Benson, Coordinator, Ninety Six District RC&D (a 501-c3), 115 Enterprise Ct., A-3, Greenwood, SC 29649. Her phone number is 864-229-2174, ext. 5, and e-mail: [elyse.benson@sc.usda.gov](mailto:elyse.benson@sc.usda.gov)

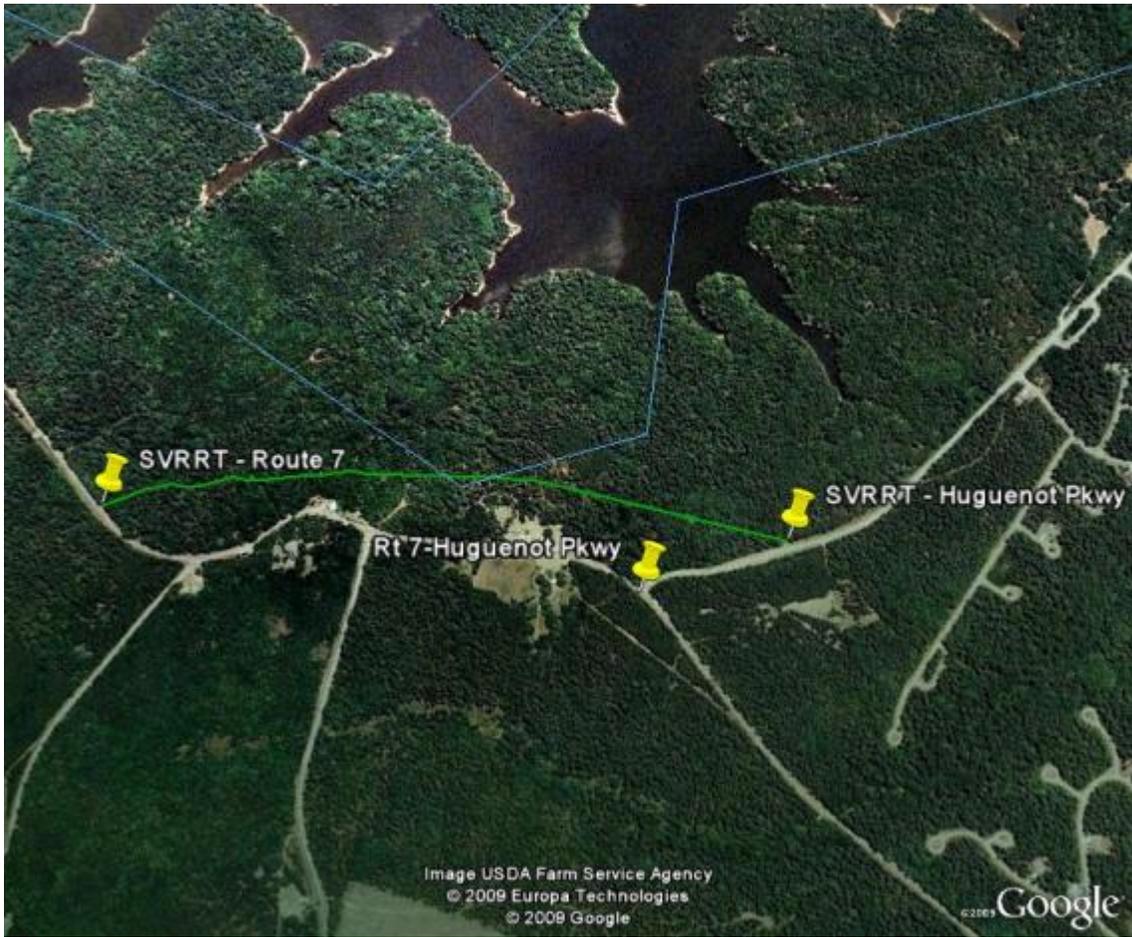


Ready to clear the Savannah Valley Rails to Trails roadbed are (l-r): John Roche, Dave Kaczmarek, Joan Stockton, Frank Clayton, Jerry Miller, Stu Whipple, Wallace Wood, Lyn Miller and Elyse Benson. The team cleared a portion of the proposed project from Huguenot Parkway to route 7.



McCormick's Pete Joslin (left) joined Savannah Lakes Villagers Phil Kinzer, Brad Allen and Don Norton in clearing the Savannah Valley Rails to Trails roadbed. Joslin's property adjoins the roadbed, and he is very pleased to see it regain life as a hiking and biking trail.

# # #



SVRR Trail is **greenline** between Huguenot Pkwy and State Route 7





Pictures of start of trail on Huguenot Parkway

Near stop sign at Rt 7

## SVRR Trail





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