

Contractor Award Announced for Virginia Creeper Trail Reconstruction

DAMASCUS, VA – The Town of Damascus is pleased to share the contractor award announcement from the U.S. Forest Service, posted to the SAM.gov project page on November 6. This marks a critical milestone in the restoration of the Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail following the catastrophic damage caused by Hurricane Helene in September 2024.

The U.S. Forest Service has announced the award of the design-build contract for the Virginia Creeper Trail to **Kiewit Corporation**, headquartered in Peachtree City, Georgia. This contract, valued at \$240,580,432.12, will encompass the full rebuild of the devastated upper 17-mile section of the trail between Damascus and Whitetop Station.

"This is incredible news, not only for the entire region, but also for those who come to Damascus from all over the nation and the world," said Mayor Katie Lamb. "The Virginia Creeper Trail is the lifeline of our precious little Town! Damascus, the heart of the Creeper Trail, is thrilled to welcome the Kiewit team. We are beyond excited for the rebuilding of the trail and the economic impact this will bring back to Southwest Virginia. Many thanks to the United States Forest Service and their wonderful team!"

The awarded contractor will restore over 30 damaged or destroyed trestle bridges and rebuild miles of washed-out trail tread. Construction is expected to begin promptly in November 2025, with hopes to reopen the trail in the Fall of 2026. Throughout the 2025 season, Forest Service crews and additional contractors have performed initial restoration efforts, removing more than 30,000 cubic yards of debris and laying the foundation for this greater recovery effort.

Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and its crown jewel, the Virginia Creeper Trail, are central to the longstanding Trail Town USA identity of Damascus. Residents and visitors alike are eager to experience the scenic upper half of the famed Creeper Trail once again.

Chris Bell, Damascus Town Manager, emphasizes the need for ongoing community engagement: "We are committed to supporting the U.S. Forest Service and Kiewit Corporation throughout this project to ensure this essential piece of infrastructure is rebuilt as efficiently and safely as possible. We have been proactively working with local businesses and property owners to prepare for this influx of contractors and temporary economic boost over the next year."

The Town of Damascus reminds the public that half of the Virginia Creeper Trail from **Abingdon to Damascus** remains open and beautiful, providing a wonderful experience for visitors year-round. Bike outfitters are providing full rental and shuttle services from their Damascus storefronts to the Abingdon trailhead.

The upper half between **Damascus and Whitetop Station** remains under strict closure for the duration of the construction period until otherwise noted, for both the safety of the public and worksite efficiency of the contractor teams. Unlawful entry into the work zone is dangerous and causes delays. There is no access to the Virginia Creeper Trail past Damascus at this time.

For more information, please visit the [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) contract listing for the reconstruction project and the [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov) webpage for Hurricane Helene Information regarding the Virginia Creeper Trail.