



Chessie Nature Trail Advisory Committee Charter

MISSION

The Chessie Nature Trail Advisory Committee was established in June 2013. The mission of the committee is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent of Virginia Military Institute with respect to establishment and implementation of guidelines for trail design, construction, use, maintenance and promotion, to provide a balanced approach between and among various trail users' and private land owners' interests, and to provide a forum for continued community input in the safe and sustainable use of the trail's natural and cultural resources.

MEMBERS & TERMS

The advisory committee shall consist of eight (8) members: six (6) ex-officio members, and two (2) appointed members. The ex-officio members shall be:

- (1) the Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), or designee,
- (2) the President of the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council (RACC), or designee,
- (3) the Rockbridge County Director of Development, or designee,
- (4) the Lexington City Manager, or designee,
- (5) the Buena Vista City Manager, or designee, and
- (6) the Director of Tourism, Lexington, Lexington and Rockbridge Area Tourism, or designee.

The appointed members of the committee shall be

- (7) an owner of private land adjacent to the trail, and
- (8) a person appointed by the VMI designee.

The VMI designee shall be chairperson of the committee. The ex-officio members are eligible for unlimited terms of service, concurrent with their position. The two (2) appointed members of the committee are eligible to serve two full two-year terms (a total of four years).

It is assumed that all members have a common interest in trail access, use, safety and preservation. Therefore, the committee shall strive for consensus-based decision making, with all members having equal weight in the decision-making process. The committee shall be purely advisory to the Superintendent with no authority over use, disposition, alteration, or improvement of the trail, which is owned exclusively by Virginia Military Institute. The committee shall not advise or perform any delegated function of the Board of Visitors of Virginia Military Institute and shall not receive any public funds. All decisions of the advisory committee shall be non-binding on the Superintendent of VMI.

MEETINGS

The committee shall meet at least semi-annually to review the current use of the trail and to review any proposals brought to the committee by any member. In addition, the committee will hold an annual meeting on or about November 15 of each year to elect officers as necessary from among its members and to carry out other business that should come properly before it.

A schedule of committee meetings shall be published. The annual meeting will be open to the public. The Superintendent of VMI or designee shall always be the chairperson of the committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chessie Nature Trail Advisory Committee shall

- provide recommendations on the creation of and implementation of Chessie Nature Trail Design Standards. The design standards will govern materials, construction, and placement of infrastructure and other trail elements including but not limited to benches, mile markers, signs, and parking areas.
- provide recommendations on the creation of and implementation of a Chessie Nature Trail Management Plan. The management plan will govern the maintenance and protection of natural and cultural resources, appropriate uses of the trail, and rules of visitation.
- review any proposals for physical alterations or improvements to the trail, research applications, and requests for events of large scale or long duration. Such review will include a determination and assignment of any associated project costs.
- review any materials relating to the trail, including, but not limited to, its history, visitor rules, maps, and interpretive signage prior to posting or publication.
- advise the Superintendent on matters with regard to promotion of the trail to the public.
- maintain a network of local organizations that have interest in preserving and enjoying the trail.
- identify grants and other funding sources available for trail improvements and management.

The advisory committee shall report to the Superintendent following each meeting on any recommendations made by the committee. Decision on or approval of any recommendations made by the committee shall be sought at the next meeting of the appropriate VMI decision-making body after any meeting of the advisory committee at which any action is taken, to the extent feasible. As the owning entity, VMI is exclusively authorized to undertake any and all activities related to the trail including, but not necessarily limited to, the authority to contract with one or more persons for improvement and maintenance of the trail and any associated assets, to coordinate with state agencies concerning resources on the trail and their management, and to pursue grants and other funding sources for improvements.