



Chessie Nature Trail

RTP Public Comment Meeting
9 September 2014

Tonight's Program

- RTP Grant Overview
- Prior Public Engagement
- VMI's PDESA Application
- Q&A

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VA Recreational Trails Program

- Matching reimbursement grant program for the creation and maintenance of trails and trail facilities
- Funded by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Administered by Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) in Virginia
- Two-part proposal:
 - Initial proposal (submitted 2009/2010)
 - Proposal description and environmental screening application (PDESA) - now

VA Recreational Trails Program

- Proposed projects must be reviewed by federal and state agencies for compliance with environmental laws and regulations:
 - US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
 - Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
 - Department of Historic Resources (DHR)
 - Division of Natural Heritage (DNH)
 - Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)
 - Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)

VA Recreational Trails Program

- The self-performed environmental screening is used by to determine which level of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis is needed, if any:
 - Categorical Exclusion
 - Environmental Assessment
 - Environmental Impact Statement

VA Recreational Trails Program

- Public comment period is required

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Prior Public Engagement

- Eight meetings in 2009 of various group sizes
- Public meeting on 29 August 2009
- Advisory Committee established 2013, representing
 - Cities
 - County
 - Landowners
 - RACC
- Public meeting on 12 November 2013
- Public web site www.vmi.edu/chessie
 - documents from the Advisory Committee
 - open comment field
- *The News-Gazette* article 9 July 2014

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- **VMI's PDESA Application**
- Q&A

VMI's Application

- Application form
- Attachments
 - Evidence of Public Comment
 - Project Location & Details
 - Prior Environmental Review
 - Coordination with Natural Resource Agencies
 - Explanations of Environmental Impacts
 - Project Timeline
 - Resolution
 - Budget

Public Comment

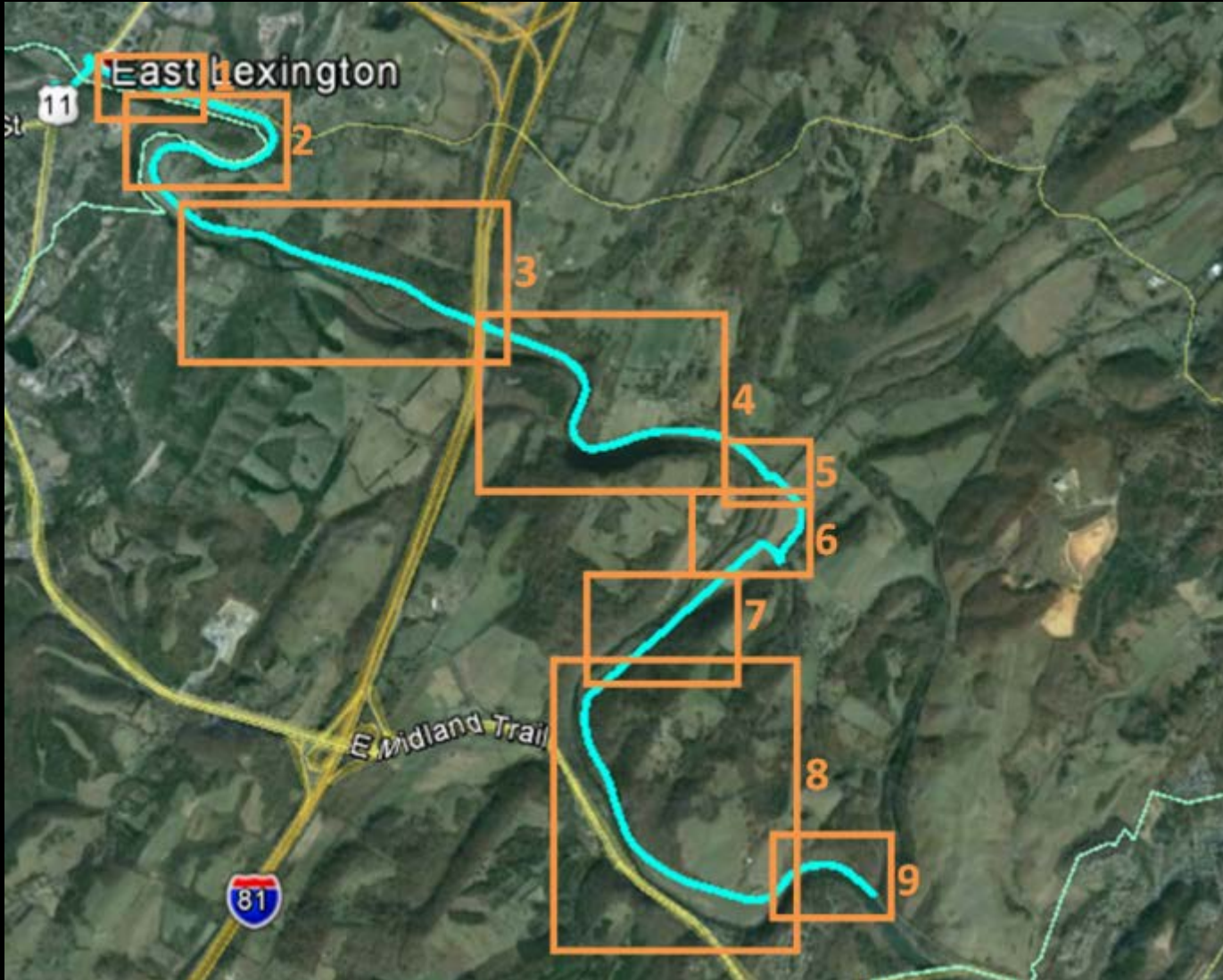
- Newspaper legal ads
- Application with attachments posted on the web site www.vmi.edu/chessieRTP
- Hard copy available to the public at the VMI Preston Library
- A public meeting 9 September 2014

Public Comment

Deadline for comments:
10 October 2014

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110 Hines Lane, Lexington VA 24450
540-464-7658
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Project Location



Project Location



Project Location



Project Location



Project Location



Project Location



Project Location



Project Location



Project Location



Project Location



Project Details

- Trailhead signs



Chessie Nature Trail

POINTS OF INTEREST

Canal boat
A canal boat is the Chesapeake, a 1980s-era motor launch of the U.S. Coast Guard, in the background and River Mariner on the left and the tops of Virginia Military Institute on the right. The boat was built by Green Glades, Clarkstown in 1984.

South River detour
The trail is closed for 2.2 miles on the South River in 2023. An alternate route of the trail follows the South River and then follows the USGS right of way along the South River.

Reid's Lock and Dam
The site of the 1850 Reid Lock and Dam is an excellent example of what construction in the 1800s along the Chesapeake Trail resembles the aftermath.

Zimmerman's Lock
Zimmerman's Lock had a water lift system for use as a lock but it was filled with rubble and was used as a dam. It was destroyed in 1911 by the late 19th century.

LEGEND

About the trail ...
The Chessie Nature Trail follows the right of way of the old Chesapeake & Ohio Railway line between Lexington and Buena Vista. The line dates from 1887 and was built along the route of the earlier James River and Kanawha Canal Co. following the North-Jose (Mary) River. In 1989, flooding caused by Hurricane Carla heavily damaged the rail line and it was abandoned by the railway. In the late 1970s, the C&O's successor, the Chessie System, transferred ownership of the land to the Nature Conservancy, which transferred it to the VMI Foundation in 1979. The foundation donated the land to VMI in 2000.

This trail passes through and along private property. Please respect the rights of the property owners by remaining on the trail at all times.

Please follow these rules:

- Trail is open dawn to dusk
- Pets must remain on a leash at all times
- Clean up after your pets
- Do not litter
- No firearms
- Stay on the trail

Accessibility

 Trail length: 7.2 miles
 Segment length: 1.8 miles
 Surface: Fine crushed stone
 Typical width: 10 feet
 Minimum width: 36 inches
 Typical running slope: less than 1%
 Maximum running slope: 1%
 Typical cross slope: less than 1%
 Maximum cross slope: 1%

This trail is maintained by VMI and its partners, the Mount Community and the Piedmont Area Conservation Council.

Project Details

- Gates



Project Details

- Gates to be replaced



Project Details

- Bollards (to impede motor vehicles)

Figure 15
Option 1 is a padlock-operable folding bollard. It folds to within five inches of the top of the concrete base. Photo by TrafficGuard Direct.



Vehicles can drive over collapsible bollards without completely removing the bollard from the ground. Courtesy of Roanoke Valley Greenways.

Project Details

- Official parking areas



Prior Environmental Review

- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment:
Chessie Trail April 13, 2010
- Limited Phase II Environmental Site
Assessment: Chessie Trail, April 16, 2010

Coordination with Natural Resource Agencies

- US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Department of Historic Resources (DHR)
- Division of Natural Heritage (DNH)
- Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)
- Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)

All approved, some conditions for further coordination

Explanation of Environmental Impacts

- All items “No Impact” EXCEPT:

1. Geological resources, soil, bedrock, slopes, streambeds, landforms, etc.	Minor	Developing the parking area will require re-grading the slope from the main road. During construction, all vegetative and structural erosion and sediment control practices shall be constructed and maintained according to minimum standards and specifications of VA Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook and VA Regulations VR 625-02-00.
23. Land/ structures with history of contamination/hazardous materials, even if remediated.	Minor	The Chessie Nature Trail is a brownfield due to residue from railroad days. However, the VA DEQ confirmed the project will not disturb enough material to have a significant impact. The scope of work was designed with sensitivity to limiting any possible exposure to contaminants both for workers and trail users.

Project Timeline

<p>Phase 1: January 2015</p>	<p>Replace Mill Creek gate, South River gate, and Buena Vista trailhead gate with bollards</p> <p>Remove gates near McKethan Park and Trimble properties</p> <p>Replace S. gate on Holland Property with new user-friendly gate – begin field testing this gate system</p>
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Project Timeline

<p>Phase 2: March 2015 – May 2015</p>	<p>Develop Parking Area #1</p> <p>Install new trailhead sign at Parking Area #1</p> <p>Improve surface of trail starting from Rt. 11 Bridge and continuing on existing trail bed approx. 1 mile</p> <p>Install strategy to allow slow flow of spring water under the new surface material</p> <p>Shore up eroded bank</p>
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Project Timeline

Phase 3:
June 2015 –
August 2015

Install new trailhead sign at South River

Replace trailhead sign at Buena Vista terminus

Replace gates at Spence property (2) and Hill property (2)

Replace decking on Spillway, Mill Creek, and Warm Run bridges

Install handrails on Warm Run bridge

Reinforce abutment on Mill Creek bridge

Project Timeline

Phase 4:
*TBD based on
remaining
funds available*

Develop Parking Area #2

Resolution

- CFO statement containing:
 - VMI's commitment to 20% match
 - Commitment to completing the project within 3 years
 - Budget commitment form showing that funds have been allocated

Budget

TOTAL PROPOSED COST	\$79,000
20% Sponsor Match	\$15,800
Gates	\$8,000
Bollards	\$6,000
Trail surface improvements	\$1,800
80% RTP Funding	\$63,200
Parking areas at 0.5 and 4.5 mile	\$30,200
Bridge repairs: decking, handrail	\$17,500
Trail surface improvements	\$9,500
Signs at three trailheads	\$6,000

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Current Public Engagement

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