



CHESSIE TRAIL TRACKS

Website: www.friendsofthechessietrail.org

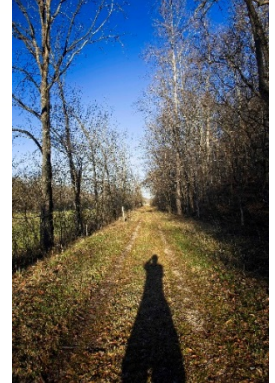
Email: chessietrail@gmail.com



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Spring 2019

As winter fades to spring, a sunny day comes on before rain, and the Trail just beyond the South River beckons. In one, you'll see the long shadow of our ace photographer Lad Sessions. Catch that section now, as VMI plans to start rebuilding the South River pedestrian bridge in June – and thanks, Lad!



Join us 7p.m. on Monday March 18, for our next event

in the Piovano Room of the Rockbridge Library in Lexington – with spring coming, we'll be hearing from Stephen Reeser of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries about the health of our local population of bass, perch and other denizens of the Maury River. Please invite any fisher folk you know to join us! Steve will bring a Power Point with him, and we'll have light refreshments on hand.

Friends of the Chessie Trail

The mission of the Friends of the Chessie Trail is to foster strong communications among Chessie Trail stakeholders, to advocate for the community's vision for the Trail, and to organize citizen support for a well-maintained and safe Trail.

IT'S ALREADY ALMOST SPRING... *How'd that happen?!*

Our 2019 season kicked off with a great winter coffee house/ annual meeting in January. We've got a great slate of **new Board members**, and our **committee reports** promise a fun and productive year ahead.

Vice Chair Dave Walsh was our speaker, offering tips on bicycle etiquette and pedestrian safety on the Trail. It's pretty straightforward, he says. Dave also told us of a youth program he has helped initiate with Maury River Middle School. The MRMS phys ed department facilitates getting students out onto the Trail as part of their exercise program, and Dave and the school round up enough bikes to send them out in teams to explore the Trail – even some with no previous biking experience! This well-managed outing puts the emphasis on safety without discouraging exploration, Dave said. All told, in the past two years, some 100 MRMS students have enjoyed a Trail bicycle outing.

Looking ahead, the local chapter of the Virginia Native Plants Society will lead wildflower walks in April. We'll plan on our annual June solstice evening walk.

There will be opportunities to tackle invasive species on the Trail and to assist the Maintenance Committee from spring through fall ... stay tuned for a picnic in September, and our annual Fall Marathon, Half Marathon and 5K is already in the works.

VMI has told us they plan to start construction on a new pedestrian bridge over the South River in mid June and to complete the project by year's end. That may entail some Trail disruption around the river, but will enable us to reclaim a stretch along the east side of the river. VMI has also been researching deeds for the "industrial" stretch of the Trail just downriver from Veterans Bridge. Part of that stretch remains blocked by a landowner's fence at present. Improved parking behind the Pure Oil sign on Old BV Road makes that a good point of entry.



Note From A Trail Friend

Thank you for doing so much for the Chessie Trail and our community. I have been on the trail with my manual wheelchair, power wheelchair, crutches, and walker lately. No matter how much rain we have had, the trail itself is always well-maintained. The parking is perfect for me as well.

The trail is my physical therapy -- flat and a perfect surface for me. I walk 30 minutes on the trail when I couldn't walk at all in the past. People are always there to help if I need it.

The Chessie Trail is also emotional therapy for me. So much of the news these days is divisive putting people against people, but when I'm on the trail I am reminded that we're all human beings: children walking with parents, older adults walking alone, children and adults riding bikes, babies in strollers, people from other countries, cadets, W&L staff and students, all of us just out enjoying a beautiful day on the Chessie Trail.

We were so pleased and grateful to get this great note from Trail friend Terri Bsullak (*pictured Left*)

Calendar of Events

Monday, March 18, 7 p.m. ~ Fisheries biologist Stephen J. Reeser of the state Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will talk about the health of fish and other aquatic life in the Maury. Are our fish healthy? Are they safe to catch and eat? We will welcome input from fishermen who regularly cast for bass, sunfish and even stocked trout in Maury waters.

Saturdays, March 23 and April 27, 10 a.m. ~ The local chapter of the Virginia Native Plants Society will lead wildflower walks on the Trail, departing from the Mill Creek meadow off Old BV Road. We'll meet at 9:30 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start. Dress warmly and bring water and/or a snack if desired. Stay as long as you like, leave when you need to. The VNPS will also be leading walks on the Brushy Hills and Maury Cliffs trails below W&L. For more information, see <https://vnps.org/events/categories/chapter-events/upper-james-river/>.

Saturday, April 13, starting at 10 a.m. ~ FOCT celebrates Rails to Trails Conservancy Opening Day with family events at both ends of the Trail. Join us at the kiosk in the Mill Creek meadow or at the Buena Vista boat ramp! Bring kids of all ages – learn more about Rails to Trails nationwide and our own premier rail-based Trail. Walk the cliffs section to see our wildflowers – one of the best wildflower walks in the county. Bike to Reids Dam and Lock and beyond. Friends of the Chessie Trail will be on hand to welcome you!

Monday, June 17, 8 p.m. ~ Our June solstice walk will step off on the evening of the full moon just before the summer solstice, from the Trail gate off Stuartsburg Road, near the Buena Vista end of the Robey Bridge. Join us for a pleasant stroll and get to know a bit about the Trail's nightlife!

September date TBA ~ Our annual picnic at Jordan's Point is a potluck with a chance to see what's happening at the Point and at the Miller's House, with a guest speaker on Trail-related topics.

Saturday, Oct. 19 ~ Our annual Fall Marathon, Half Marathon and 5K will start from McKethan Park beginning at or before 8 a.m. (earlier for those picking up registration materials). Volunteers are always needed and very welcome for this exciting event! For more information, check our race website at <https://www.runthechessietrail.com/> And check out our Facebook "Save the Date" post at <https://z-m-www.facebook.com/events/302227170386531/>.

LEND A HAND, JOIN THE FUN, MEET THE CREW(S)!

You don't need to be a member of FOCT to help on one of our committees, but we certainly appreciate your membership. If you have not yet joined for 2019, you may do so by downloading our membership form and mailing it to us, or by joining on-line. Check out our website for doing either at <http://www.friendsofthechessietrail.org/membershipdonations.html>. Regular activities on the Trail include hands-on work by our Maintenance Committee, a k a MainCom; our annual fall foot races – marathon, half marathon and 5K; outings scheduled by the Recreation Committee, which may this year include another “BV to BV Challenge,” a repeat of our race with Buena Vista, Colorado, and possibly some biking events; and talks and other programs presented by the Communications/Outreach Committee.

If you haven't joined us yet, or just want to know more, shoot us an email at chessietrail@gmail.com – and again, we welcome new members, but everyone is welcome on the Trail and in our meetings and activities!

Our thanks go out to all of our members and donors for 2019 – you know you have helped us make the Trail a better place and sponsor a growing roster of activities!

Laurie Armstrong
Bonnie Bernstein and Hank Dobin
Betty Besal
Terri Bsullak
Elsa and Ted Burrowes
Bruce and Linda Bytnar
Peggy Dyson Cobb
Helen Farrar
Roy and Roberta Fauber
Robbie, Kathy, Robb, Mary Faulkner
Debbie Funkhauser and John Driscoll
Tom Hackman and family
John and Elizabeth Harralson
Leon Johennning
Margaret Kirkby
Becky McKenzie and Marie Humiston
Emma Patrick
Robert Pingry
Suzanne Rice
Janie Richter
Jane and Shep Rouse
Lad and Vicki Sessions
Eric and Elise Sheffield
Alexia Smith
Sidney Sterling
Lisa Tracy
Dirk van Assendelft and Family
Dave and Tasha Walsh
Toni and Andy Williams
Sarah Wilson and family
Chris Wi

Many thanks to web manager Hannah Slough McKemy, who maintains our site at www.friendsofthechessietrail.org