



# Chessie Trail Tracks

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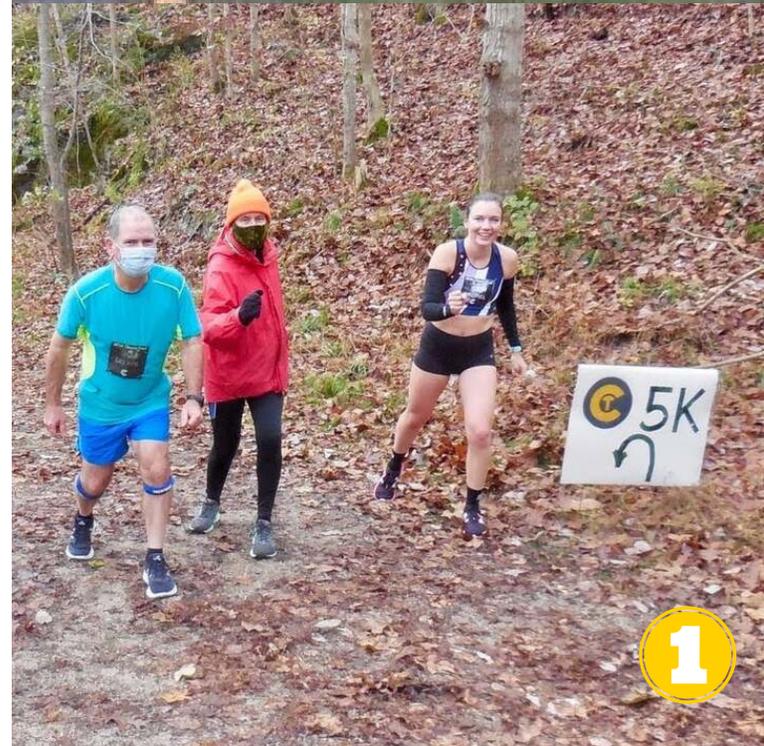
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## Run the Chessie is Back!

The Chessie Trail Marathon, Half Marathon, and 5K will take place on October 30th, 2021. The races are back in-person, and for the first time we will be running a Marathon Relay! In the spirit of the weekend, all runners racing in their Halloween costumes are eligible to receive a free vintage t-shirt and prizes will be awarded for best costumes.

We expect that remnants of COVID-19 will still be with us in the Fall. We will be taking precautions to protect all of our runners and volunteers, including a staggered start, self-serve aid stations, and social distancing as required by guidelines at the time of the race.

To register and learn more, visit the 2021 Run the Chessie [race website](#).

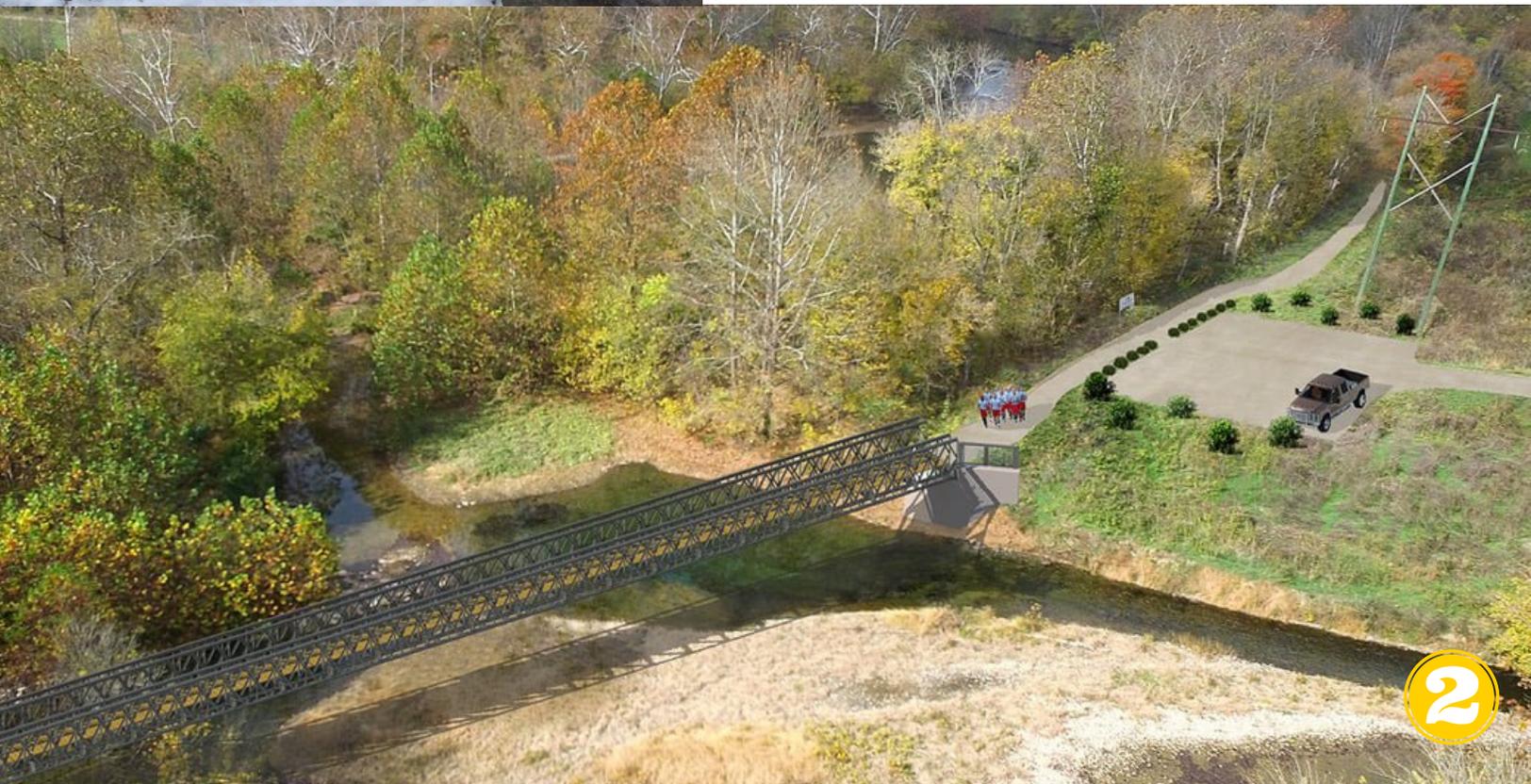




## New Construction on the South River Bridge

A pedestrian bridge carrying the trail over the South River will be replaced over the coming months. The original bridge was washed away by Hurricane Isabel in 2003, and ever since then, trail users have had to detour onto Stuartsburg Road to continue on the trail. Work began in December and completion is planned for this summer! The Chessie remains open to the public during construction, though trail users will have to take a slightly longer detour.

*Bridge rendering below courtesy of VMI.*





## Middle School Girls Hiking Club Explores the Chessie

Do you know many teenagers who would willingly wake up and go to school on their day off? Well, you have not met the Parry McCluer Middle School Girls Trailblazers Hiking Club. For seven Fridays this past fall they'd wake up early and meet at the school ready for adventure. Two of their hikes took place on the Chessie trail, totalling nearly 10 miles!

Participation in the club, sponsored by Boxerwood and the Carillion Foundation Fund, was free. Before this fall one member had not walked more than a mile at one time. Every week she was so proud of herself. During a time of great change this club gave a bit of normalcy to all the club's members.

*Girls crafted field journals using recycled materials. Photos and story courtesy of Boxerwood.*

## A New Wildflower Guide

Jan Smith and Peggy Dyson-Cobb of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Upper James River Chapter, tagged plants along the Trail and created a Wildflower Guide to share with Trail users. The Wildflower Guide contains information on thirty different plants, including Dames Rocket, Toothwort, and Bluebells. You can find a copy of the guide on our website!

*Photo courtesy of Lad Sessions*



## Scavenger Hunt

On April 24, Friends of the Chessie Trail hosted a scavenger hunt to celebrate Trails Day, an annual spring celebration of America's trails! Over a dozen children and adults walked the Chessie to find and record nature's treasures. Scavenged items included bird sounds, wildflowers, and "a stick shaped like a Y."



Before



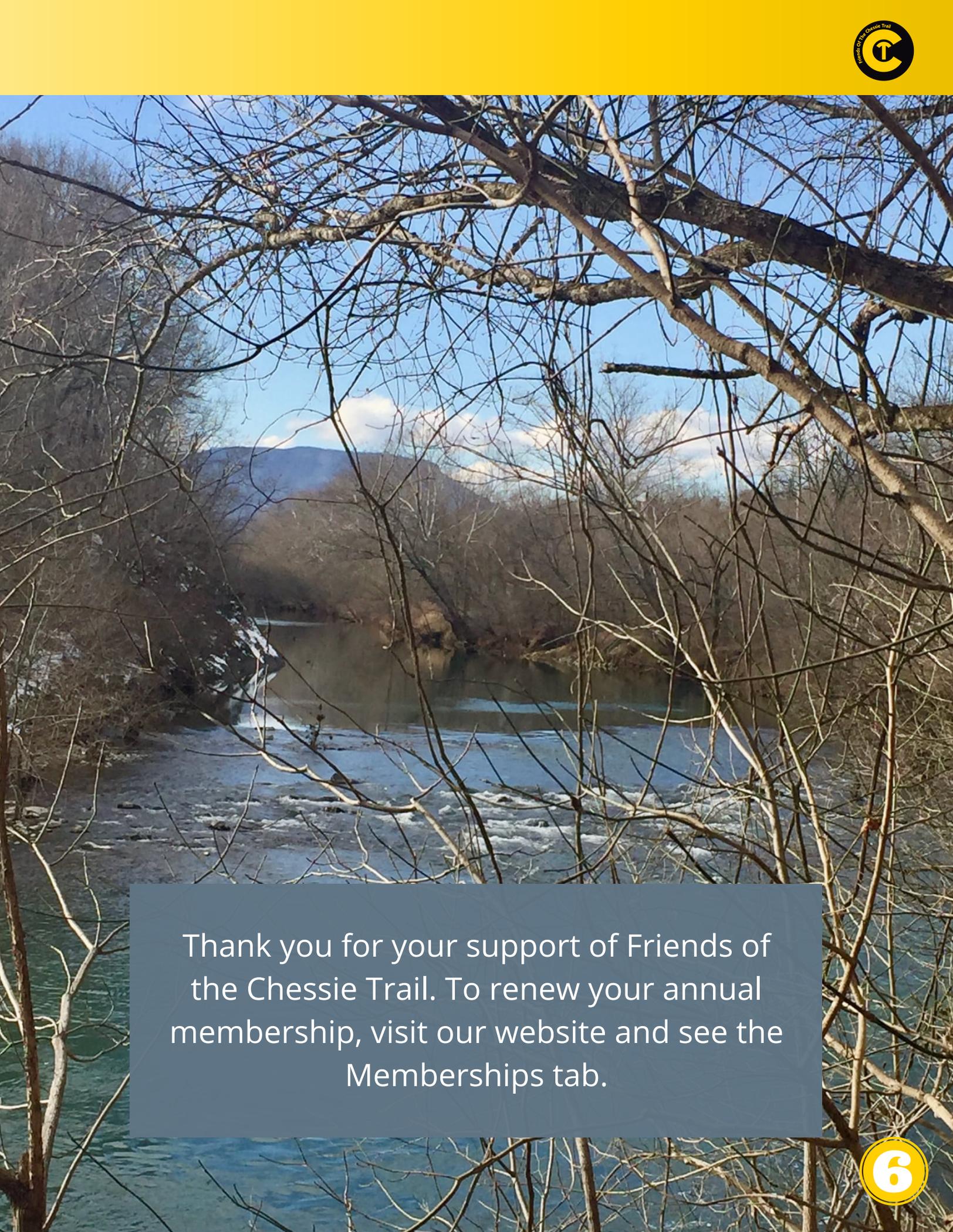
After

## Completing the Missing Link

Friends Of The Chessie Trail just completed a four-year project to construct more than 1200 feet of new trail and a parking area on the Buena Vista end of the trail. Thanks to this work, and work by the City of Buena Vista, trail users can now proceed unimpeded from East Lexington all the way to Buena Vista, the River Walk trail, and beyond.

Last month, the FOCT board of directors approved purchase of more than a million pounds of fill clay and crushed stone that would be needed to complete work on the new section of the trail. Work moved forward quickly as 285 tons of clay fill was placed, covered with 219 tons of crushed stone, and graded.

All told FOCT spent more than \$6000 on the trail and parking area project, funds which were donated by its members and proceeds from its annual race and race sponsors. In addition, a substantial donation of crushed stone was made by Charles Barger and Son. One hundred percent of the labor on the project was donated by FOCT volunteers.

A scenic view of a river with a waterfall, framed by bare tree branches. The water is clear and blue, and the surrounding forest is mostly without leaves. In the background, there are mountains under a blue sky with some clouds.

Thank you for your support of Friends of the Chessie Trail. To renew your annual membership, visit our website and see the Memberships tab.