

is a 7.2-mile public access rail trail that runs along the scenic Maury River in Rockbridge County, Virginia, between the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista.

The Trail parallels a canal tow-path that once brought boats from Richmond and Lynchburg to Lexington's industrial and commercial hub at Jordan's Point. In 1861, the C&O Railroad Co. purchased the canal property and laid tracks for the James River Line and Lexington branch. Rail service continued until 1969, when Hurricane Camille took out the trestle across the Maury.

Today the Trail is owned and maintained for public use by Virginia Military Institute (VMI).

TRAIL ACCESS

The Chessie is a point-to-point trail with a flat gravel and packed-dirt surface, good for walking and running. Cycling is also permitted. There are multiple entrances, all with designated parking.

The level path, shady stretches, and beautiful land and riverscapes make it an appealing destination for families.

River access for kayaking and canoeing is at both ends of the Trail. At the Lexington end, Jordan's Point is one of the better places to put in and take out. Downstream, boaters can put in or take out and use the boat ramp at the intersection of Stuartsburg Road and Route 60.

TRAIL EVENTS

Hundreds of runners participate in the Annual Chessie Trail Marathon, Relay, Half Marathon and 5K in October. The event is organized by Friends of the Chessie Trail (FOCT). Information and registration forms are available



on the FOCT website. Kids' fun runs, family cycling events, and group dog walks are also posted on the FOCT website.

NATURAL HISTORY

Throughout the year, the Friends and other naturalist groups organize walks and other exploratory activities open to the public.

- Virginia Native Plant Society tags plants from Mill's Creek to Reid's Dam for a self-guided wildflower tour in spring.
- Rockbridge Bird Club leads walks along the river's varied habitats—pasture, riparian buffer, woods—to spot migrant and breeding birds.
- Geologists teach in the field, finding evidence in the exposed rock faces of mountain-building events that formed the Appalachians.

For more information about the history, natural history, and stewardship of the Chessie Nature Trail:

friendsofthechessietrail.org
www.millershousemuseum.org
vmi.edu/chessie

Also: *Field Guide to the Chessie Nature Trail* (RACC, 2009)

TRAIL TIPS

- There are no bathroom facilities on the trail. Public restrooms are open at Jordan's Point Park during daylight hours.
- Picnic facilities are open year-round at Jordan's Point Park. Picnic tables are also available at the Lexington end of the trail.
- The trail is blocked at 84 Old Buena Vista Road, so trail users must detour onto the road for 200 feet.
- Short stretches are accessible for some wheelchair users.
- Beware of falling rocks along exposed sections of cliff and erosion at the edges of the Trail.

SHARING THE TRAIL

- The Trail passes through unfenced cattle pastures. Please be respectful, stay on the path, and use caution, especially when livestock are present.
- The Trail is open to cyclists, families with strollers, and pets on leashes, so please make room for fellow users. Cyclists should give audible warnings to pedestrians before passing left.
- VMI cadets routinely use the Trail for their field training exercises. The trail remains open during these times.
- Pets should be kept on leashes at all times for their safety and that of other Trail users' pets and neighbors' livestock.
- Plants should be left undisturbed.
- Please "leave no trace behind." Trash, recycling, and pet-litter stations are installed at access points along the Trail.

Please report Trail maintenance and safety issues to:

VMI Physical Plant Help Desk
(540-464-7357)

or PhysicalPlantHelp@vmi.edu

For all Trail emergencies, dial 911.



This guide was published by FRIENDS OF THE CHESSIE TRAIL (FOCT). The FOCT fosters communication among Trail stakeholders, advocates for the community's vision for the Trail, and organizes citizen support for a well-maintained and safe Trail.



Please become a Friend or contribute!
friendsofthechessietrail.org

Questions?
 Email chessietrail@gmail.com



TRAIL MAP AND GUIDE FOR The Chessie Nature Trail

Open year round, dawn to dusk. Free public access.



Points of Interest along the Chessie



The Miller's House at Jordan's Point interprets the industrial and transportation history of the area.



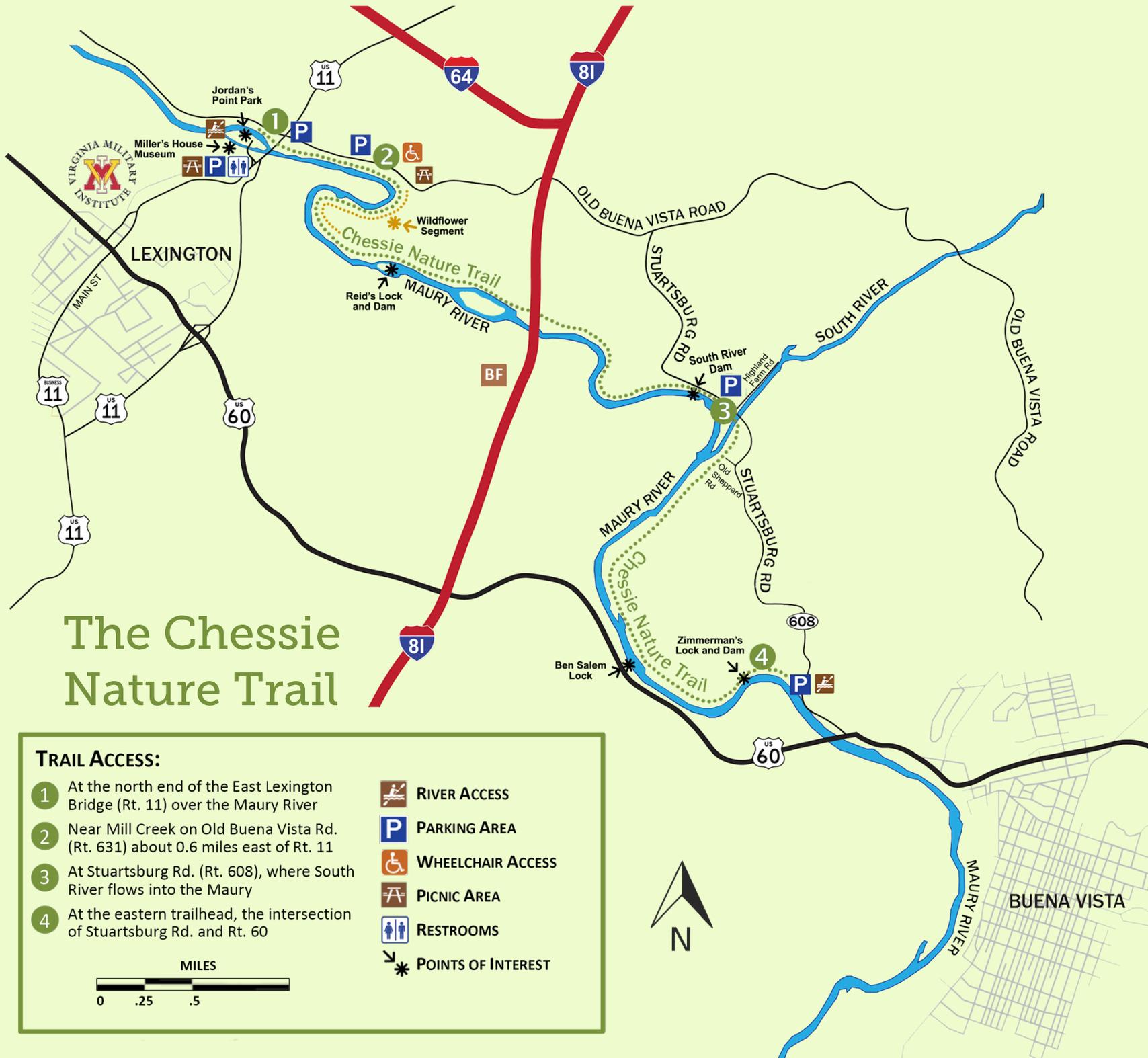
Trail information can be found at the kiosk near Mill Creek, the Lexington trailhead.



Old railway markers alerted C&O engineers to the distance in miles to Balcony Falls, and when to blow the whistle. New markers are posted every half-mile heading east from Lexington to Mile 4.



The stretch of Trail from Mill's Creek to Reid's Lock and Dam is known for an abundance and diversity of wildflowers.



The Chessie Nature Trail

TRAIL ACCESS:

- 1 At the north end of the East Lexington Bridge (Rt. 11) over the Maury River
- 2 Near Mill Creek on Old Buena Vista Rd. (Rt. 631) about 0.6 miles east of Rt. 11
- 3 At Stuartsburg Rd. (Rt. 608), where South River flows into the Maury
- 4 At the eastern trailhead, the intersection of Stuartsburg Rd. and Rt. 60

- RIVER ACCESS
- PARKING AREA
- WHEELCHAIR ACCESS
- PICNIC AREA
- RESTROOMS
- POINTS OF INTEREST

