

VMI Chessie Nature Trail Advisory Committee Meeting, May 12, 2015

The Chessie Nature Trail Advisory Committee met at 4:00 p.m. on May 12, 2015, at the VMI Physical Plant, Hinty Hall conference room.

Attending committee members were MAJ Jennifer deHart, chair; LTC Dallas Clark; Terry Harrington, Lisa Tracy; Sam Crickenberger; Chris Wise

TRAIL UPDATES:

- Gates at Keith Holland's property were left unlocked recently. This brings up the issue of installing new locks and keys and tightening the control of the gate locks. A second lock provided by the landowners would permit access without requiring a VMI key.
- A cable near Mill Creek has been repaired.
- A tree is down near Zimmerman's Lock (on the Childress Property) that needs to be addressed. The work is scheduled to be completed next week.
- Physical Plant has rebuilt the cattle overpass on the Childress Property. This now includes handrails.
- Repairs have been made to ruts caused from vehicles – the culprits have been reprimanded by law enforcement.
- Deciduous cleaning at top of Reeds Lock has been completed. It is not known who completed this.
- Clearing of a trail has been completed just below Reeds Lock that enhanced access to the river. It is not known who completed this.

SUMMER INTERNS

- Intern Josh Pike (VMI cadet) will complete a hazard analysis of the trail with focus on the cliffs. Software will be used to model rock fall.
- Intern Ruby will support the volunteer efforts.

GATES

- The "English Gate" is aesthetically proper but may not be operationally effective.
- Gates should support all users (bicyclists, disabled, etc.).
- Metal and wood options exist. Wood may be a better option as it would not be subject to being 'bent' as would occur with the metal version.
- Consideration of a screen/gating could be added to the wood gates to keep users from 'climbing' over the gates.
- The latch on the gate needs to be at a height to be operated by all users (wheelchairs, etc.) so that it is within reach.

RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE ITEMS

- Maintenance Committee of the Friends of the Chessie Nature Trail is suggesting signs to be installed at fishing locations. Most specifically in the East Lexington Area.
- Members of the maintenance committee will be involved in specific elements:
 - o Robbie Faulkner – excess materials from projects that meets specifications will be donated to the trail and applied to trail surface (meeting with Robbie next week)
 - o Eric Sheffield– working with Cliff Kirakoff to design and test a gate.
 - o Joe Skovira – railing at Reed’s Lock and Dam – does not have proper fall protection in place that is needed. JB Harris from Physical Plant will attend this site visit as will Josh Pike.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

- The second draft of the plan was updated and includes the following items:
 - o Trail Closure: provides for ability to close trail for maintenance or hazards.
 - o Snow: Is not an event for closure and that the trail will not be plowed.
 - o Community Events: denotes requirement to notify Physical Plant and for large events the requirement to complete a Facility Use Agreement.
 - o Volunteering: Organizing group is responsible to notify Physical Plant and provide a roster, incident report, etc.
 - o Maintenance Tasks: Update to the listing of items and frequency.

SIGNS

- Two sign examples were provided for review. Sign #1: “Trail Passes Through Private Property Stay On Trail Dogs on Leash” Sign #2: “Caution Falling Rock”
 - o Signs will be installed at locations where the trail passes through adjacent privately owned property or falling rock areas (respectively). Eight of each signs have been ordered. These are to be installed in late May 2015.
- A document of source information has been compiled which could be used for consideration on educational/interpretive signs. Funding and prioritization is not currently in place. Kerriann Laubach is the point of contact who is a student at WLU.

GRANT UPDATE (Recreational Trails Program)

- Meeting was held on 12 May with DCR on the Grant project. A project manager will be identified by VMI for the project.
- Friends of Chessie Nature Trail is interested in meeting with the new designated project manager for the grant project.
- Quarterly reports are required with many details.
- The projects must be publically procured to include federal terms etc.
- The budget details will need to be provided in more detail.

CONNECTION OF CHESSIE NATURE TRAIL AND WOODS CREEK TRAIL

- Funds from VDOT are available and there is 14 months to get the project completed.
- Coordination of funds for localities is to be determined.

THANKS

- Significant effort has been accomplished and many thanks to the many involved in supporting.

The business portion of the meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.