



ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact Gage Harter.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Fauquier County

Program Title: Upper Rappahannock Water Trail

Program Category: Parks & Recreation

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: PAUL S. McCulla

Title: FAUQUIER COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Signature: 

Upper Rappahannock Water Trail

Fauquier County, Virginia

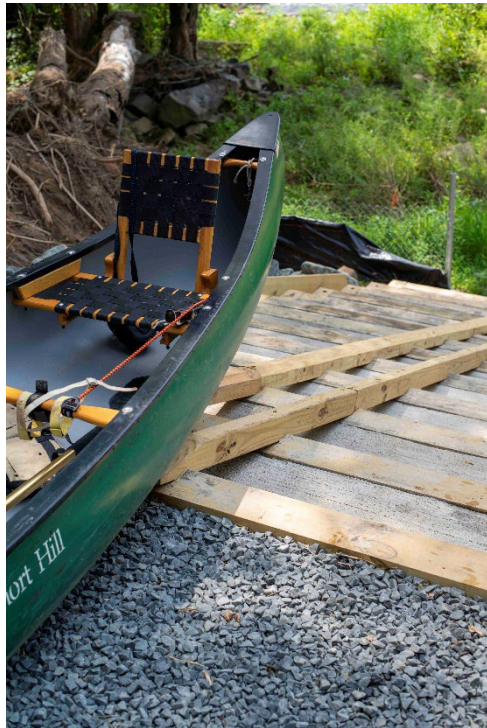
Executive Summary

Fauquier County's western border is composed of the historically significant Rappahannock River. History along the Rappahannock spans from our modern farms and golf courses to pre-colonial occupation. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there were 0 public access points on the Rappahannock River in Fauquier County. Numerous kayak/canoe enthusiasts noticed the lack of access and Fauquier County's Board of Supervisors made public access to the Rappahannock River a part of their Strategic Plan. In order to facilitate public access, Fauquier County partnered with The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR), and Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC). Since the Upper Rappahannock Water Trail Project started, 3 kayak/canoe launches have been installed in Fauquier County with more planned, the "Explore Fauquier" mobile app was launched to promote resources on the Rappahannock and around the County, and a new MOU strategy was created that can be used across the Commonwealth to incentivize public river access.

Funding for the project came from multiple places through the multiple partners Fauquier County worked with. Fauquier County paid for initial design work in order to have plans approved by Community Development. Further archaeological surveys were paid for through a PATH Foundation Grant along with a large portion of the funds for the river access project at Phelps Wildlife Management Area. A grant from the Virginia Environmental Endowment provided funding for materials for the Rector Tract river access project. Friends of The Rappahannock received multiple grants and private donations which included the funds to construct the Riverside Preserve access site. The Department of Wildlife Resources provided significant donated staff time and machinery to construct roads and canoe/kayak launches along with the help of County staff and volunteers.

Overview

After Fauquier County's Board of Supervisors made public access to the Rappahannock River a part of their Strategic Plan a local landowner, Mr. MacDonald, donated 196 acres which he named Riverside Preserve to Fauquier County. Riverside Preserve is found just upstream from the historic Waterloo area where Civil War battles were fought. Downriver in the Town of Remington a piece of

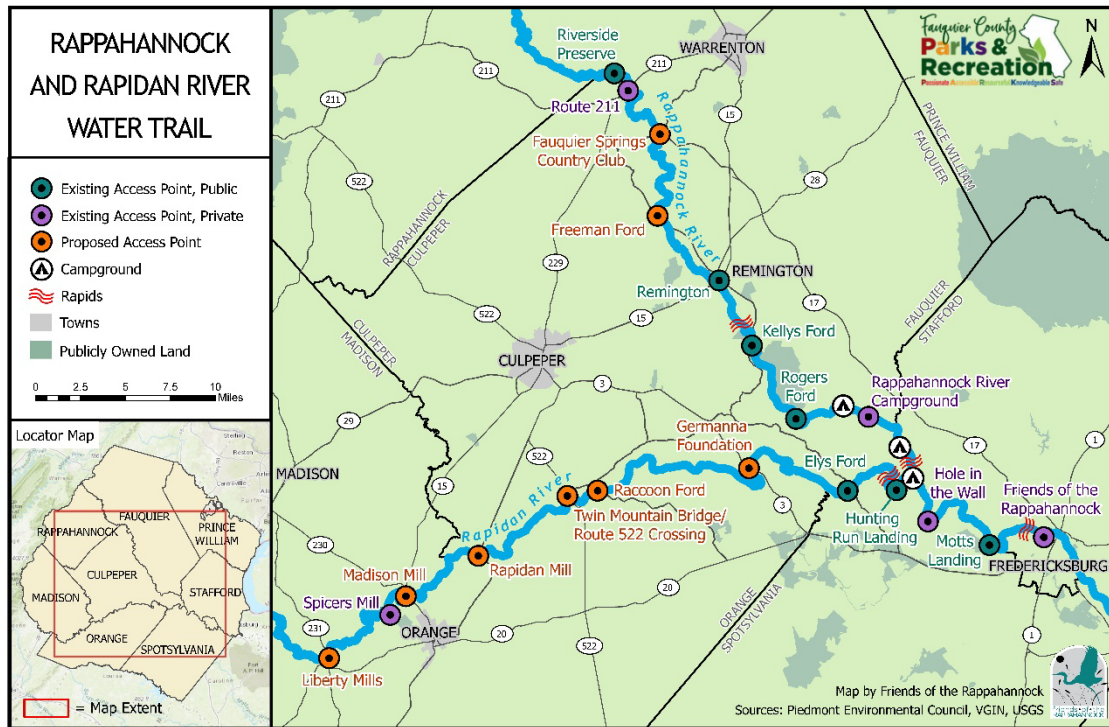


land called the Rector Tract, purchased by the American Battlefield Trust for its Civil War significance, was donated to Fauquier County. The Rector Tract is located within the Town of Remington and adjacent to a railroad bridge that was the site of multiple Civil War battles. Farther downriver the Phelps Wildlife Management Area in southern Fauquier County was selected as another access point as it is public land. Both the Riverside Preserve and Rector Tract had permanent conservation easements placed upon them to protect them and ensure they remain as open wildlife areas.

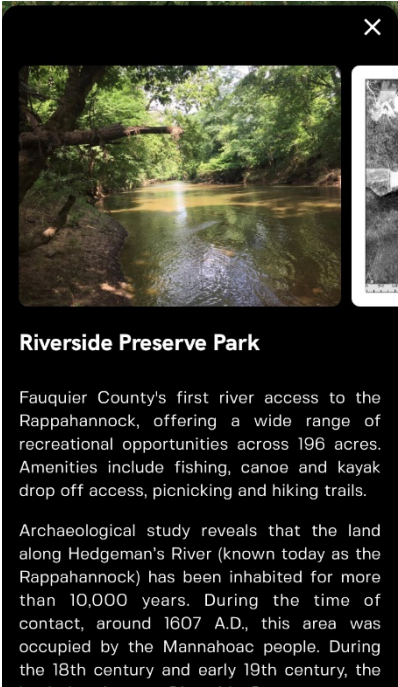
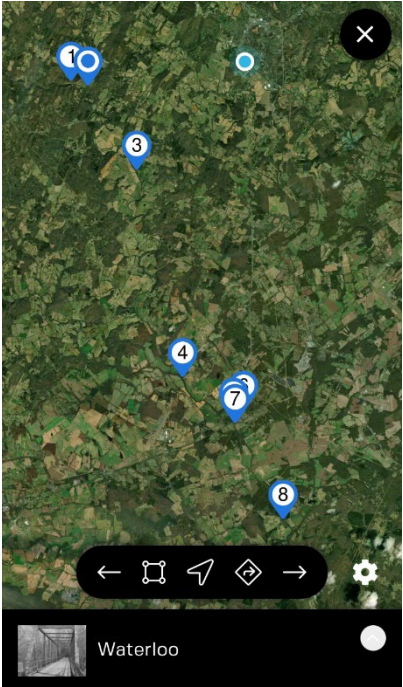
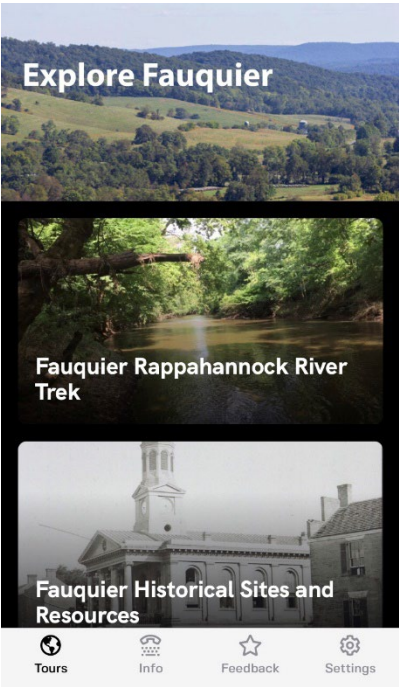
Partnerships were and continue to be essential to the success of this project. Fauquier County did not have the funds to build these three launches, plus COVID-19 impacted the County's budget and were under an essential spending and hiring freeze. Fauquier County paid for the design work needed to have the plans approved by Community Development along with the development of the "Explore Fauquier" mobile app to display canoe/kayak launches and historic resources along the Upper Rappahannock. The County had to then convince both DHR and VOF to allow a launch to be placed at Riverside Preserve and Rector Tract. DHR required an archaeological study to be performed which Friends of the Rappahannock paid for out of a PATH Foundation Grant. The John Marshall SWCD supported the initial site surveys and planning for Riverside Preserve and the Rector Tract. They also

received a \$25,000 PATH Foundation grant to fund a large portion of the river access project at the Phelps Wildlife Management Area (WMA) managed by DWR. Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) received a grant from the Virginia Environmental Endowment to provide funding support for materials for the Rector Tract river access project. Additional funds were provided to DWR to complete the launch at the Phelps WMA. Friends of the Rappahannock received multiple grants and private donations to support these projects. This includes cash to construct the Riverside Preserve access site, funding for tree planting and education programs at Riverside Preserve and Rector Tract, funding for site designs and planning, funding for interpretive signage for all sites, and are currently working to develop water trail maps, digital resources, and a website for the river trail as a whole. The Department of Wildlife Resources provided significant donated staff time and machinery to construct roads and canoe/kayak launches at each of the sites.

The Upper Rappahannock Water Trail sought to maximize location and cost-effectiveness through strategically planned designs, diversified funding sources, use of in-house staff and machinery, and soliciting donations of land and materials. The comprehensive planning involved has already provided information and resources to concurrent efforts to expand river access in adjacent counties of Culpeper, Madison, Orange, and Greene. This process developed a new MOU strategy that can be used across the Commonwealth to assign management responsibilities of the river access portions of the property to DWR, while the rest of the municipal land continued to be maintained by the local government. Fauquier County's Upper Rappahannock Water Trail successfully opened the first public access on the Rappahannock in Fauquier County, along with multiple others, and will continue to bring new outdoor recreational opportunities to the area while setting an example of how to cooperate efforts of local government with outside entities.

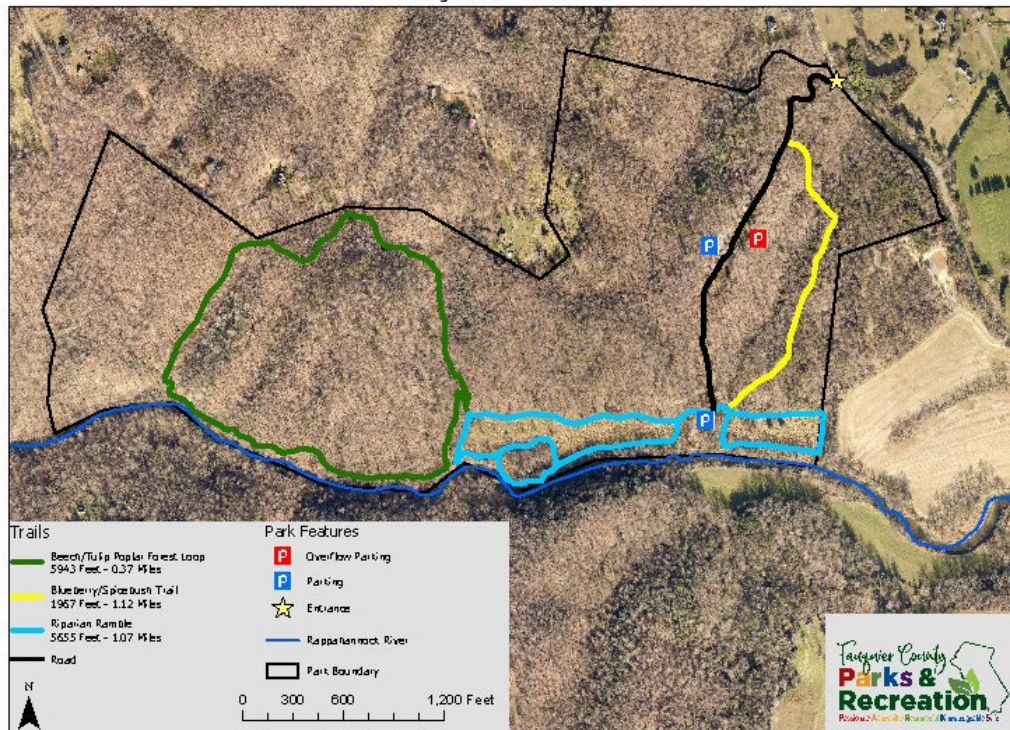


Rappahannock and Rapidan Water Water Trail Map (above) displays existing and proposed river access points, campgrounds, and rapids along the Upper Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers. “Explore Fauquier” (below) was developed by Fauquier County in order to promote the Upper Rappahannock Water Trail and resources along it.



Riverside Preserve

8150 Leeds Manor Road



The Riverside Preserve Map (above) displays the entrance road and parking along with the expansive walking trails. The boat ramp (below) was installed at Riverside Preserve Park through the efforts of Fauquier County and its partners.





Celebrations at the Rector Tract (above) mark the official opening of the boat ramp with a ribbon cutting in August of 2021. The boat ramp (below) was installed at the Rector Tract through the efforts of Fauquier County and its partners.





Kayakers navigate rapids (above) along the Upper Rappahannock Water Trail. The boat ramp (below) was constructed at Phelps Wildlife Management Area through the efforts of Fauquier County and its partners.

