

Village News

Appomattox River Trail master plan completed

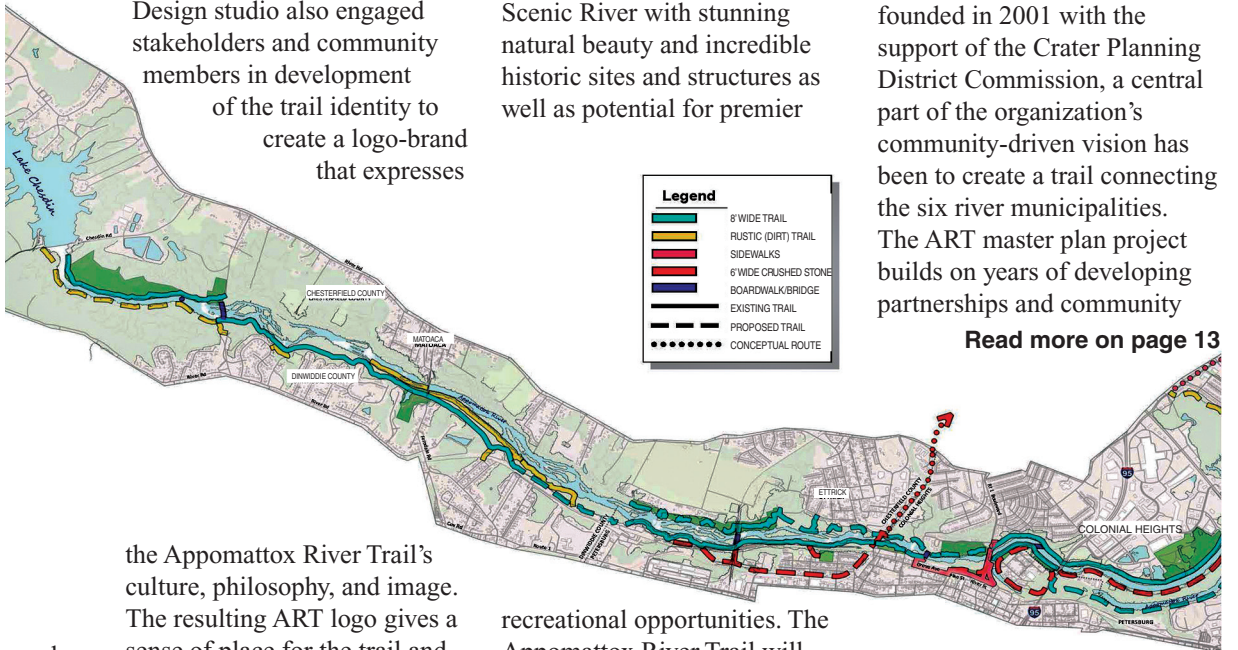
After an intensive 12-month process that launched with a \$100,000 proactive grant from The Cameron Foundation last spring, Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR) is releasing its Appomattox River Trail (ART) Master Plan. The document represents the combined efforts of FOLAR and two consulting design companies – Land Planning & Design Associates and AB Design – along with significant input from regional stakeholders and the public.

The ART Master Plan is a guide to locating and prioritizing shared-use trails with a coordinated signage system through the six municipalities that border the lower Appomattox River. The area encompasses the counties of Chesterfield, Dinwiddie,

and Prince George, and the cities of Colonial Heights, Hopewell, and Petersburg. The document is presented in two parts. Part I focuses on the trail plan, and Part II focuses on the corresponding signage plan, a unique aspect of the project. The planned trail and signage offer walkers and cyclists safe, enjoyable connections to recreational opportunities, greenspace, and nature, as well as connections to historic sites and structures, businesses, jobs, schools, and transit.

As part of the plan

development process, FOLAR and the AB Design studio also engaged stakeholders and community members in development of the trail identity to create a logo-brand that expresses



the Appomattox River Trail's culture, philosophy, and image. The resulting ART logo gives a sense of place for the trail and is the centerpiece of the Part II Signage Master Plan.

“Our region is fortunate to have a designated state Scenic River with stunning natural beauty and incredible historic sites and structures as well as potential for premier

recreational opportunities. The Appomattox River Trail will connect them and make them available for everyone,” said

FOLAR chair Ken Newman. Since FOLAR was founded in 2001 with the support of the Crater Planning District Commission, a central part of the organization's community-driven vision has been to create a trail connecting the six river municipalities. The ART master plan project builds on years of developing partnerships and community

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TERRIFIC TEACHERS

A series, part 2

She uses personal touch to connect with students

BY DANIELLE OZBAT

Last school year, Susan Wilson, a third-grade teacher at C. C. Wells Elementary School, decided to boost the confidence of her students who were about to take the SOLs by mailing all 24 of them a handwritten, personalized letter. Each one highlighted her students' strengths and abilities developed during the school

year. They had no idea the letters were coming.

“I did not know she was doing this and one evening, my email started going nuts because the parents couldn't believe she took the time to do that and the kids just loved it,” Debbie Weatherford, C. C. Wells' principal, said. “One parent videotaped the child reading his letter and emailed that to me; another parent

contacted the news and they came out and did a story. It was very cool and something the kids will never forget.”

Wilson said students sometimes get burned out by testing and believe a grade defines them so she wrote the letters because she wanted her students to know they were more than a test score.

“I feel like, especially in third and fourth and fifth

[grade], there's so much emphasis on testing and I feel like all we ever do sometimes is test, test, test, and I get that, but I feel like sometimes the kids get burned out and they just think ‘All I am is this grade, that's all I am,’” Wilson said. “And I wanted them to know, ‘I know that you're a big brother,’ and ‘I know that you're a wonderful soccer player and I see your artistic abilities,’

and I wanted them to know I see that and I think you are wonderful for that, not because of a number that you get, not because of a grade that you get: you're wonderful because of who you are, and as long as you try your best, then that's all we can ask for.”

Wilson has been teaching at C. C. Wells Elementary

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