# *Blueways Mapping:*

## Access Points, Historic and Scenic Sites On the Rappahannock River and its Branches


**Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission**
420 Southridge Parkway
Suite 106
Culpeper, VA 22701



July 2005

## *Overview*

The Rappahannock River is the longest free-flowing river on the East Coast and provides substantial, if somewhat unknown, recreational opportunities. River conditions range from flat water canoeing to Class III and IV rapids at times of heavy flow. More importantly, though, could be its scenic beauty through rolling farmland and through forested land where little evidence of civilization intrudes. It is important to consider the Rappahannock River and its integration into developing blueways and greenways when one examines the region's transportation network. Several public landings occur at roadways or bridges that intersect the river system and usage is expected to increase. The Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission has composed this Blueways Mapping corridor study for the Rappahannock River and two of its branches, the Hazel River and the Rapidan River.

## *Objectives*

This report is part of an ongoing effort to link the region's roadways with its developing network of greenways and blueways. Both help build active communities by adding to the region's tourism and recreational opportunities. Some outdoor enthusiasts have long known about the Rappahannock River's scenic and unspoiled beauty. However, it is not yet known as a popular tourist and recreational destination. This report, and further development of regional blueways systems, will help raise people's awareness about the Rappahannock River as a resource and lead to two important outcomes:

1. Promoting the manageable and responsible use of the river, and

2. Greater conservation and preservation of the river in its natural state.

Recent developments have shown much interest in the protection and recreational development of the Rappahannock River. In early 2005, the removal of the Embrey Dam in Fredericksburg allows users to continue their float without having to portage their boat. In Fauquier County, recent land acquisition along the Rappahannock River outside the Town of Remington has been proposed as a county park with a river landing. And lastly, there has been much discussion and cooperation on the regional level regarding the management of numerous parcels of open land owned by the City of Fredericksburg that front the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers.

## *Maps*

The following maps depict important locations along the river, such as water access points and historic or scenic sites. The historic points of interest were converted from paper to digital format with original documentation provided in *The Rappahannock Scenic River Atlas, Historic Sites on the Rappahannock and its Branches* (W.E. Trout III, Virginia Canals and Navigation Society, 1992). Locations are approximated as no known surveying of these points has been conducted.

*NOTE:* Many points illustrated on the maps are on private property and permission should be gained from property owners before visiting any sites.

### HISTORIC AND SCENIC SITES

#### Map 1: Historic and Scenic Points on the Rappahannock River and its Branches

This first map gives an overview of the length of the Rappahannock River and its branches that are being studied. The length runs from near the river's origination near Chester Gap in Rappahannock County down to the City of Fredericksburg, following the boundaries of many counties along the way. Shown on the map are historic and scenic points, public boat landings, nearby towns of interest, and major roadways near the river corridors.

#### Map 2: Topographic Quadrangles for the Rappahannock River and its Branches

Shown are the outlines for the various USGS topographic maps covering the waterways under study. Available from local outfitters, mail, and online, these maps can provide additional details along the rivers, such as roads, topography, and landmarks.

#### Map 3 a – d: Detailed Historic and Scenic Points on the Rappahannock River and its Branches

A series of maps giving a closer look at the location of historic and scenic sites. Points are numbered with an index of names and features following the maps.

### RIVER ACCESS POINTS

#### Map 4: Proposed Park near Town of Remington with Proposed Public Landing

In early 2005, Fauquier County and the Piedmont Environmental Council worked together to secure 27 acres of land along the Rappahannock River near the

Town of Remington. It is proposed that this land be developed as a county park with potential boat access to the river.

**Map 5: Topographic Map of Boat Landing at Kelly's Ford**

A detailed view of the public boat landing at Kelly's Ford on the Culpeper County side of the river.

**Map 6: Topographic Map of Boat Landing at Motts Run on River Road**

A detailed view of the public boat landing on the southern side of the river at Motts Run at River Road near the City of Fredericksburg. Also located here is Clore Bros. canoe outfitters.

**Map 7: Topographic Map of Boat Landing, City of Fredericksburg**

A detailed view of the public boat ramp in the City of Fredericksburg.

## *Appendix*

**Map of the City of Fredericksburg-Owned Parcels**

This map details the location of City of Fredericksburg-owned riverfront parcels along the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers in the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region. Fredericksburg purchased the parcels in 1969 to protect its water resources if a future river intake was needed. The City of Fredericksburg has been working with neighboring counties to determine the best ways to manage and use this undeveloped land along the river. Future uses might include conservation easements on most of the land while accommodating parkland and additional public boat landings.

**Example Trip Descriptions**

Different lengths on the Rappahannock River and its tributaries can be used for a variety of canoe or kayak trips. Listed here are some example trip descriptions for the Rappahannock, Hazel, and Rapidan Rivers.

**River Safety Brochure**

Created by the Friends of the Rappahannock, this brochure gives important safety tips for trips on the Rappahannock River. The brochure includes a diagram of the rivers that includes floating times for each leg as well as the level of rapids one can expect to encounter.

**USGS Water Levels**

These USGS gages report the level of water at several locations and current conditions can be viewed online. Water levels should be checked before any trip is taken.

Rappahannock River at Remington, VA (unsafe over 5 feet):
**http://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/uv/?site_no=01664000&PARAmeter_cd=00065,00060,62620,00062**

Rappahannock River near Fredericksburg, VA (unsafe over 3.2 feet):

**http://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/uv/?site_no=01668000&PARAmeter_cd=00065,00060,62620,00062**

Rapidan River near Culpeper, VA:
**http://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/uv/?site_no=01667500&PARAmeter_cd=00065,00060,62620,00062**

Hazel River at Rixeyville, VA:
**http://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/uv/?site_no=01663500&PARAmeter_cd=00065,00060,62620,00062**

***Maps***

Map 1
Historic and Scenic Points
on the Rappahannock River
and its Branches
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
5
10
15
Miles
Chester Gap
522
Fauquier
Flint Hill
Orlean
Rappahannock River
Washington
211
Waterloo
Warrenton
Rappahannock
Hazel River
Monumental Mills
Rixeyville
29
229
Remington
Brandy Station
Culpeper
Sumerduck
Stafford
Culpeper
3
Richardsville
17
Rapidan River
Orange
Spotsylvania
Fredericksburg
Rappahannock-Rapidan
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Map 2
Topographic Quadrangles
for the Rappahannock River
and its Branches
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
6
12
18
Miles
CHESTER GAP
FLINT HILL
MASSIES CORNER
JEFFERSONTON
WARRENTON
CASTLETON
BRANDY STATION
REMINGTON
GERMANNA BRIDGE
RICHARDSVILLE
STORCK
MINE RUN
CHANCELLORSVILLE
SALEM CHURCH
FREDERICKSBURG
Rappahannock Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION
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Map 3a
Detailed Historic and Scenic Points on the Rappahannock River and its Branches
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River of Study
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
1
2
3
Miles
Warren County
Chester Gap
Rappahannock County
Flint Hill
Washington
Orlean
Fauquier County
Waterloo
Jordan River
Rappahannock River
Rappahannock River becomes canoeable after Jordan River
635
522
647
211
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
Rappahannock-Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION
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Map 3b
Detailed Historic and Scenic Points on the Rappahannock River and its Branches
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River of Study
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
1
2
3
Miles
Rappahannock County
Culpeper County
Waterloo
Amissville
Monument Mills
Rixeyville
Remington
Rappahannock River
Hazel River
proposed landing
211
229
29
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
Rappahannock Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION
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Map 3c
Detailed Historic and Scenic Points on the Rappahannock River and its Branches
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River of Study
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
1
2
3
Miles
Remington
Sumerduck
Richardsville
Fauquier County
Culpeper County
Orange County
Spotsylvania County
Stafford County
Rappahannock River
Rapidan River
610
3
17
Rappahannock-Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION
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Map 3d
Detailed Historic and Scenic Points on the Rappahannock River and its Branches
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River of Study
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
1
2
3
Miles
Stafford County
Spotsylvania County
Fredericksburg
17
3
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
102
104
105
106
107
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124
125
127
128
129
130
Rappahannock-Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION
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## *Index of Detailed Historic and Scenic Points on Maps 3a - 3d*

| ID | NAME | QUAD | RIVER | COMMENT1 | COMMENT2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pickerell's Mill | Chester Gap | Rappahannock River | | |
| 2 | Beggarly's (Baggar's, Wither's) Mill | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 3 | Iett's Mill (Approx) | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 4 | Johnson's (Hand's) Mill at Black Rock Ford | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 5 | Chancellor's (Putnam's, Marshall's) Mill | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 6 | Eveland's Mill ?* | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 7 | Lewis's Mill ? | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 8 | Waters' Mill | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 9 | Rock Ford | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 10 | Remains of timber crib, piers of bridge ? | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 11 | Rapp canoeable at confluence with Jordan F | Flint Hill | Rappahannock River | | |
| 12 | Parker's Mill | Massies Corner | Rappahannock River | | |
| 13 | Thorn's Mill / Ford | Massies Corner | Rappahannock River | | |
| 14 | Fish Trap | Massies Corner | Rappahannock River | | |
| 15 | Crawley's Ford | Massies Corner | Rappahannock River | | |
| 16 | Parker's (Thorn's) Mill | Massies Corner | Rappahannock River | | |
| 17 | Hackley's (Tapp's) Mill at Tapps Ford | Massies Corner | Rappahannock River | | |
| 18 | Ractor's (Hinson's, Brigg's) Mill at Hinson's F | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 19 | Rollins's Ford | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 20 | Glascock's Mill | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 21 | Stone abutment of Glascock's Mill Road Brid | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 22 | Remains of crib dam | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 23 | Glen (Glenn) Woolen Mills Dam ruins | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 24 | large crib dam | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 25 | Hine'rs Mill | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 26 | Smoke stack of Keith's woolen factory | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 27 | crib dam? | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 28 | Waterloo shops | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 29 | Hart's dam | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 30 | Hart's first mill | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 31 | Hart's ford | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 32 | Hart's mill | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 33 | Thompson's ford | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 34 | Lawson's Mill ? | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 35 | Locks 31 & 32 | Jeffersonton | Rappahannock River | | |
| 36 | Sandy ford dam ruins at lock 30 | Brandy Station | Rappahannock River | | |
| 37 | Fox's Mill | Brandy Station | Rappahannock River | | |
| 38 | Foxville dam ruins | Brandy Station | Rappahannock River | | |
| 39 | Lee's mill dam ruins | Brandy Station | Rappahannock River | | |
| 40 | Freeman's ford | Brandy Station | Rappahannock River | | |
| 41 | Ficklin's Dam ruins | Castleton | Hazel River | head of Ficklin's Canal | |
| 42 | lock | Castleton | Hazel River | | |
| 43 | Spring Valley dam | Castleton | Hazel River | head of Spring Valley Canal | |
| 44 | Lewellen's dam | Castleton | Hazel River | | |
| 45 | Rixey's Dam | Brandy Station | Hazel River | at probably Willis's Mill | |
| 46 | Aestham's Ford | Brandy Station | Hazel River | | |
| 47 | Mitchell's Ford | Brandy Station | Hazel River | | |
| 48 | Settle's Dam | Brandy Station | Hazel River | at Starke's Ford | |
| 49 | Starke's Mill | Brandy Station | Hazel River | | |
| 50 | Hurt's Dam | Brandy Station | Hazel River | | |
| 51 | Jones' Dam | Brandy Station | Hazel River | at Deep Ford | |
| 52 | stone lock | Brandy Station | Hazel River | | |
| 53 | Green's Mill | Brandy Station | Hazel River | | |
| 54 | Welford's Dam ruins | Brandy Station | Hazel River | | |
| 55 | Beverly's Ford (or Cunningham's) Dam ruins | Remington | Rappahannock River | Beverly's Ford Canal | |
| 56 | Hedgeman's Hole dam ruins | Remington | Rappahannock River | | |
| 57 | Lock 26 | Remington | Rappahannock River | | |
| 58 | Potential Remington park access | Remington | Rappahannock River | Fauquier County | |
| 59 | Martin's (Morgan's) Mill dam ruins | Remington | Rappahannock River | | |
| 60 | Wheatley's Dam ruins | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| 61 | Wheatley's Canal | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| 62 | Monument to Major Pelham | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| 63 | Strode's (Mackay's, Wheatley's) Mill Canal | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| 64 | mill ruins | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| 65 | Game Commission landing at Kelly's Ford | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| 66 | Kelly's Mills Canal | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |

* A question mark (?) indicates more research is necessary to confirm the validity of the historic feature.

| ID | NAME | QUAD | RIVER | COMMENT1 | COMMENT2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **67** | Locks 20 - 24 | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| **68** | Cochran's Mill? | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| **69** | Mountain Run Dam ruins & Lock 19 | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| **70** | Field's Ford | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| **71** | A pair of wing dams | Germanna Bridge | Rappahannock River | | |
| **72** | Kemper's (Roger's Ford Dam ruins' | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **73** | Snake Castle (Ellis's) Dam ruins | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **74** | Snake Castle Canal | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **75** | Ellis's Ford | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **76** | Lock 16 | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **77** | Skinker's Dam ruins | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **78** | Martin's Ford (Sweet) | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **79** | Skinker's Canal Lock 14 | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **80** | Rappahannock River Campground | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **81** | Crawley's Dam (Scheel) | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **82** | Deep Run Dam ruins | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **83** | Skinker's (Spring) Mill (Scheel) | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **84** | Deep Run Canal | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **85** | Lock 13 | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **86** | Powell's Dam ruins | Richardsville | Rappahannock River | | |
| **87** | Powell's Canal | Storck | Rappahannock River | | |
| **88** | Lock 10 - 12 | Storck | Rappahannock River | | |
| **89** | Richard's Ford and Ferry | Storck | Rappahannock River | | |
| **90** | Rapidan Dam ruins | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **91** | Old Rapidan Canal | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **92** | Rapidan Canal | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **93** | Urquhart's (Germanna) Mill Dam ruins | Mine Run | Rapidan River | | |
| **94** | Game Commission landing site | Germanna Bridge | Rapidan River | | |
| **95** | Weedon's Ford | Germanna Bridge | Rapidan River | | |
| **96** | Sinker's Ford upper fish traps | Germanna Bridge | Rapidan River | | |
| **97** | Sinker's Ford | Richardsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **98** | Sinker's Ford lower fish traps | Richardsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **99** | rock ledge | Richardsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **100** | Culpeper Gold Mine Canal | Chancellorsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **101** | fish dam | Chancellorsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **102** | Todd's Ford | Chancellorsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **103** | Game Commission landing at Ely's Ford | Chancellorsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **104** | Urquhart's Saw Mill Dam | Chancellorsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **105** | Crib Dam ruins at head of Miller's Mill race | Richardsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **106** | Hardin's Ford | Chancellorsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **107** | Strode's Mill and Dam | Chancellorsville | Rapidan River | | |
| **108** | Hunter's Iron Works | Fredericksburg | Rappahannock River | | |
| **109** | Rappahannock Outdoor Center | Fredericksburg | Rappahannock River | | |
| **110** | Falmouth Dam ruins | Fredericksburg | Rappahannock River | | |
| **111** | Fredericksburg Canal Basin | Fredericksburg | Rappahannock River | | |
| **112** | public boat ramp | Fredericksburg | Rappahannock River | | |
| **113** | Embrey Dam | Fredericksburg | Rappahannock River | | |
| **114** | Lock 1 (Minor's) | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **115** | Taylor's Canal | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **116** | Taylor's Dam ruins | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **117** | Locks 2 - 3 | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **118** | Bank's Canal | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **119** | Bank's Dam | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **120** | Sanford's Ferry | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **121** | public landing | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **122** | Ballard's Old Dam | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **123** | Ballard's Canal | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **124** | Ballard's Dam ruins | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **125** | Porch's Lock and Porch's Dam ruins | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **126** | Scott's Dam ruins and Guard Lock | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **127** | Tubal (Spottswood's) Furnace ruins | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **128** | Locks 6 - 8 | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **129** | U.S. Ford Dam | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |
| **130** | Gold mines in canal | Salem Church | Rappahannock River | | |

* A question mark (?) indicates more research is necessary to confirm the validity of the historic feature.

Map 4
Proposed Park near Town of Remington with Proposed Public Landing
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River of Study
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
1,000
2,000
Feet
Remington
Payne Sch
Gaging Sta
Providence Ch
Estimated location of the proposed 27-acre park in the Town of Remington with proposed boat landing
58
59
15
29
656
655
651
654
future access
Rappahannock Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION
August 1, 2005, blueways_remington_park.mxd

Map 5
Topographic Map of Boat Landing at Kelly's Ford
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River of Study
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
1,000
2,000
Feet
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
Kellys Ford
Marsh
future access
Rappahannock-Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION
August 1, 2005, bluewaye_kellys_landing.mxd

Map 6
Topographic Map of Boat Landing at Motts Run
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River of Study
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
1,000
2,000
Feet
120
117
118
119
121
RAPPAHANNOCK
RIVER
SPOTSYLV
Motts Run
Hill
Roadside
Park
Bitzner
Meadow
RIVER
ROAD
Embrey Hill
future access
228
232
252
250
618
Rappahannock Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION
August 1, 2005, blueways_Fburg_landing.mxd

Map 7
Topograhpic Map of Boat Landing, City of Fredericksburg
Points of Interest
Populated Places
Public Boat Landings
River of Study
River
Major Roads
County Boundaries
N
0
1,000
2,000
Feet
111
112
Mary Washington Hospital
Power Plant
Aqueduct
Tidal Flat
F&S NAT MIL PARK
Chatham Heights
Mary Washington Mon
Mary Washington House
Scotts Island
FREDERICKSBURG
City Hall
Confederate Cem
Cems
Park
RAPPAHANNOCK
Hazel Hill
Washingtons Boyhood Home
NAT MIL PARK
Grant Sch
Visitor Center
Ferry Fa
future access
Rappahannock Rapidan REGIONAL COMMISSION
August 1, 2005, blueways_Fburg_landing.mxd

## *Appendix*

# City of Fredericksburg-Owned Parcels

**Estimated Acreage in the R-R Region**

| County | # Parcels | Calculated Total * | VOF Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Culpeper | 17 | 1,148 ** | **1,276** |
| Fauquier | 18 | 528 | **487** |
| Orange | 1 | 29 | **22** |

* calculated totals are based on digitized parcel boundaries and may differ from actual acreages

** only 15 of 17 properties able to be located

**Example Trip Descriptions**

There are several lengths on the Rappahannock River that are canoeable. Users should take time and weather conditions into consideration. Permission should be gained before using landings located on private property.

These example trips are summaries of those compiled by H. Roger Corbett.[1] His system for classifying the difficulty of rivers can be generally summarized as follows:

1: *Easy*. Minor riffles with minimal maneuvering required.
2: *Medium*. Frequent unobstructed rapids requiring minor maneuvering.
3: *Difficult*. Extensive maneuvering needed with large rapids and increasing current. Course not always recognizable.
4: *Very difficult*. Long and complex rapids with very swift current. Special precautions and considerations must be considered.

*Orlean (Rt. 647) to Waterloo (Rt. 211)*

Difficulty: 1 or 2
Distance: 13.5 miles
Time: 5 hours

The Rappahannock River becomes canoeable 50 yards upstream of the Rt. 647 bridge where the Jordan River flows into the Rappahannock. This section of the river is fast and narrow, with width varying between thirty and fifty feet. Water conditions are best suited for canoeing in winter and spring or during the early summer following periods of heavy rain.

*Waterloo (Rt. 211) to Remington (Rt. 29)*

Difficulty: < 1
Distance: 18 miles
Time: 8 hours

This length is a long stretch of flat water and requires long distance paddling. The scenery is good with old fords, mill dams, and canal dams lining the river. The gradient picks up at the Hazel River, but not enough to create rapids. Water conditions are best suited for canoeing in winter and spring or during the early summer following periods of heavy rain.

[1] Paraphrased from: H. Roger Corbett. *Virginia White Water: A Canoeing Guide to the Rivers of the Old Dominion. The Seneca Press, Springfield VA, 1977.*

*Remington (Rt. 29) to Kellys Ford Bridge (Rt. 620)*

Difficulty: 1 – 2 or 3
Distance: 4.5 miles
Time: 1.5 hours

One of the most popular canoeing lengths in Virginia, this run offers periods of flat water and challenging rapids. The river here is between seventy and ninety feet in width and passes through farmland. Canoeing is possible almost throughout the year, best winter through early summer and after heavy rains in summer and fall.

*Kellys Ford Bridge (Rt. 620) to Motts Run Landing (River Road)*

Difficulty: 1 – 2 or 3
Distance: 24 miles
Time: 10 hours

It is 15.5 miles from Kelly's Ford Bridge to the Rapidan River and 8.5 miles from the Rapidan River junction to Motts Run Landing. There are no bridges or public landings before Motts Run Landing. This stretch of the Rappahannock is one of the most scenic because it is heavily forested on both sides and with few man-made structures visible. Several challenging rapids are present, especially at the confluence of the Rapidan River and the Rappahannock, caused by the remains of the Rapidan Dam, which was the largest dam built on the entire canal system. This length is canoeable for most of the year, though it is recommended to wait until after moderate rains in the summer.

*Motts Run Landing to Fredericksburg (Rt. 1)*

Difficulty: 1 – 3 or 4
Distance: 4.5 miles
Time: 4 hours

Before its removal in 2005, canoes had to be portaged around the Embrey Dam. The river is clear now, and new rapids may continue to develop in the dam area over time. The gradient quickly increases after the dam and there are several challenging rapids and drops. A new public landing has been created downstream of Route 1 in the City of Fredericksburg. This length is canoeable most of the year, though it is recommended to wait until after moderate rains in the summer.

*Hazel River: Monument Mills (Rt. 640) to Rappahannock River*

Difficulty: < 1
Distance: 12.5 miles

Time: 8.5 hours

This is one of the flattest river trips in Virginia. Little current will require hard paddling. Sites include dam ruins from the old canal system. Takeout will be at the Rt. 29 bridge in Remington. Canoeable in winter and spring or during early summer after heavy rains.

*Rapidan River: Germanna Ford (Rt. 3) to Ely Ford (Rt. 610)*

Difficulty: < 1
Distance: 13 miles
Time: 6 hours

A flat and slow portion of the river. High banks make it difficult to see surrounding farmland. Canoeable in winter and spring or during early summer after heavy rains.

*Rapidan River: Ely Ford (Rt. 610) to Rappahannock River*

Difficulty: 1 - 2
Distance: 6 miles (plus distance to takeout on Rappahannock River)
Time: 2 hours

The gradient increases on this portion of the Rapidan River and presents several rapids. The remnants of several dams can be found along the river. Additional time must be given to canoe down the Rappahannock River to find a place to takeout, as no opportunities are on the Rapidan River. This length is canoeable most of the year, though it is recommended to wait until after moderate rains in the summer.

# RECOGNIZING
## *MOVING WATER*
# HAZARDS

**HIGH WATER** Swiftly moving or muddy water or river out of its banks, in the trees, are warning signs to stay off the river.

**STRONG CURRENT** Current is stronger in restricted areas and when water level is high. Risk often cannot be seen.

**UNEVEN RIVERBED** Deep holes, uneven current, rocks, roots, broken glass, and fishing line all pose real dangers.

**DON'T STAND IN MOVING WATER** Foot entrapment between rocks or in debris lets current force victim under. Float. Keep feet up and downstream to fend off rocks.

**HYDRAULICS** send water falling over ledges or dams, creating holes, then recirculating the water to fill the holes, dragging trapped victims under repeatedly.

**STRAINERS**, such as downed trees, debris piles, and undercut rocks, let water flow through but strain out boats and bodies, holding them under. Walk around or climb over.

**DIVING** in shallow water or into unexpected underwater rocks and logs can cause injury, paralysis, or death.

**HYPOTHERMIA** Cold water exposure, or even dampness with a little windchill, can cause loss of coordination, clouded thinking, unconsciousness, and death. Dress appropriately.

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS** make swimmers and boaters more likely to take risks but less able to deal with these risks.

Drawings on this panel fashioned after the work of Les Fry. Use with permission.

Culpeper ● Remington ● Fredericksburg

## River Levels *by* Internet

24 hours a day

**http://va.water.usgs.gov**

**Know BEFORE you GO**

The river is UNSAFE for RECREATIONAL USE when levels are above:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 feet in Culpeper<br>5 feet in Remington<br>3.2 feet in Fredericksburg | = | STAY OFF! |

**FOR RIVER-RELATED EMERGENCIES**

**Call 911**

## *It's the Law!*

**BWI** (Boating While Intoxicated) is prohibited under Virginia law. Violators will be prosecuted. Legal limits have recently been lowered. If you drink, wait till your boating day is ended.

**POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL** is prohibited at all public access points, including parks and riverbanks. Violators will be ticketed. Under Virginia law, possession of alcohol by those under 21 years of age will result in revocation of driver's license.

**LIFE JACKET REQUIRED** It is illegal to enter the river without a life jacket when Falmouth (Rt. 1) Bridge gauge is in the Yellow. It is illegal to enter the river when the gauge is in the Red. **Violators will pay all rescue costs, including helicopter.**

**LITTERING** of riverbank will be ticketed and fined.

**34-Minute Video**
for Sale or
FREE 2-Day Rental

**"River Safety on the Rappahannock"**

Call 1-540-373-3448

*Friends of the Rappahannock*

# RIVER SAFETY *on the* RAPPAHANNOCK

Digital painting after a Free Lance-Star photograph.

Rescuers struggle against rising water to free a man whose foot is caught between rocks in the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg.

FOR Friends of the RAPPAHANNOCK

1-540-373-3448

http://www.crrl.org/community/for/

# RIVER SAFETY CHECKLIST

**RESPECT THE RIVER**
Natural patterns of free-flowing rivers can be learned but cannot be controlled.

**BUDDY SYSTEM**
Never wade, tube, swim, or boat alone. Go with someone who knows the river.

**LIFE JACKET**
Essential for fishing, wading, tubing, swimming, or boating on moving water

**EQUIPMENT**
Wear shoes, appropriate clothes, and sun protection. Take a first aid kit and plenty of drinking water.

**SWIMMING ABILITY**
Be a swimmer. Non-swimmers often panic, endangering themselves and others.

**SKILL/PHYSICAL CONDITION**
Take a boating course. Be physically fit. River sports are demanding.

**NO ALCOHOL/NO DRUGS**
Impaired coordination and judgement increase risk of loss of life.

**TRIP PLANNING**
Consider water levels and available time. Allow one hour's paddling for every two miles of river (longer if fishing). Let someone know your plans; when and where you will start, and when and where you expect to complete your trip.

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 hours | Flat |
| 3 hours | Tough Rapids |
| 16 hours | Moderate Rapids |
| 8 hours | Flat |
| 5 hours | Easy Rapids |
| 8 hours | Moderate Rapids |
| 3 hours | Easy Rapids |
| 30 minutes | Tough Rapids |
| 1-2 hours | Dangerous Currents |

Graphics by Tom Cowan

**WEATHER/TIME OF DAY**
Get a weather report before starting your trip. Lightning, cold weather, high winds, dusk, all mean get off the river until conditions improve.

**SCOUT UNKNOWN HAZARDS**
Rapids are always hazardous, but even calm areas can hide deep holes in the riverbed, treacherous underwater currents, shifting sand bars, broken glass, fish hooks, undercut rocks, logs, roots and assorted trash.

## Extreme Danger!

**23-foot high Embrey Dam**
Undertow, underwater rocks/debris close to surface. Strong currents. Carry around on left bank.

**WATER LEVELS**
Check the gauge before beginning your trip. When the river is in the Green area, life jackets are essential. In the Yellow, stay off the river. In the Red, stay off the river; rescue is difficult or impossible!

**Heed these WATER LEVEL GAUGES**

Rescue is difficult or *impossible* at this water level!

The informal gauges painted on bridge abutments are not correlated to official gauges in the Fredericksburg area. They should never be used to determine if it is safe to paddle a river section.

**Since the early 1960's, there have been almost 70 drownings from Fauquier County to Urbanna. Two-thirds took place in the Fredericksburg area. Most were strong, young adults. Most knew how to swim. None wore a life jacket.**

Acknowledgment:

*Prepared in cooperation with the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and the Virginia Department of Transportation*

The contents of this report reflect the views of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC). The Commission is responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, or Virginia Department of Transportation. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation, nor does it condone trespassing on private property.