



DCR interoffice MEMORANDUM

To: Kelly McClary
From: Lynn Crump
Date: November 30, 2021
Subject: Extension of the Maury River Scenic River Designation



In July 1, 2020, a segment of the Maury River in Rockbridge County was designated as a Virginia Scenic River. Specifically, the designated segment is from the confluence of the Calfpasture and Little Calfpasture Rivers to Furrs Mill Road Bridge in Beans Bottom on Route 631, a distance of approximately 19.25 miles.

In 2021, Rockbridge County, the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista, and the Town of Glasgow requested that the lower section of the Maury River from the Route 631 bridge downstream to the confluence of the James River be studied for possible Scenic River designation. In September of 2021 over the course of four days, an evaluation was completed by staff from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and local citizens. The total length covered by the multiple days of evaluation was approximately 23.1 miles.

Based on the evaluations, it was determined that the lower section of the Maury River from Route 631 to the James River **qualifies for designation**. Combined with the existing designated section, the total designation distance for the Maury River is approximately 42.35 miles.

Following are the findings that support this designation.

FINDINGS:

The Maury River originates in Virginia's Ridge and Valley Province flowing eastward to the James River and then to the Chesapeake Bay. The Maury River is located completely in Rockbridge County within the Valley and Ridge region of Virginia and is generally characterized by a series of Class I rapids separated by flat water. It flows through agricultural, rural and forested landscapes with several concentrated areas of development in the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista and the Town of Glasgow. Most of the corridor is held privately with some development and open fields of pasture, croplands and hayfields beyond the partially intact 100-foot buffer.

The river has a few breached dams, a section in Buena Vista with a flood wall and a section in Glasgow that was rerouted after severe floods in the 1970's. There are a couple of industrial sites adjacent to the river. These sites cover short shore lengths creating a momentary interruption in the pristine waterway while adding some visual interest. There are many houses within view of the river, but most are seen for a very short time, thus creating a feel of remoteness and separation from the hustle and bustle of urban life.

Historically, the river was used for transportation, especially when the North River Canal system, part of the James – Kanawha Canal system extended up to Lexington from the James. Due to this transportation focus there are concentrated industrialized sites along the river corridor. Pieces of the lock system developed in the early 1800s and remnants of various mills still remain. Other notable historic sites and districts have National Register of Historic Places under the National Park Service (NRHP) and Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) designation include, but are not limited to: Echols Farm, Jordan's Point Historic District, Elisha Paxon Place, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington and Buena Vista Historic Districts, and the James River – Kanawha Canal System.



Most of this section of the Maury is shallow and made up of bends interspersed with long stretches that allow for long views of the higher elevations. There are a few sections of flat water that are separated by rapids and ledges. There are numerous long sections of forest edge that are interrupted by a change in the bank when cliffs or rock outcroppings highlight rapids or riffles that add interest. The forest types also change depending on the steepness and aspect of the slope. All this contributes to the interest and variety experienced on this stretch of river.

Fish quality was rated as moderate to high by the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). Game fish in this section include: smallmouth, rock and largemouth bass; redbreast and yellowbreast sunfish; and carp, catfish, and suckers; as well as some bluegills and muskellunge.

There are a large number of documented significant natural resources along the corridor, including several vascular plants, invertebrates and intact natural communities. Some present are: Rockbridge Cave Amphipod, Blind Cave Millipede, Yellow Lance, Widow's-cross, Dwarf Wedgemussel, Green Floater, Beaked Dodder, Regal Fritillary, Wild Black Currant and Dwarf Skullcap.

Water quality, which is based on the turbidity in the growing season and frequency of trash was given an overall medium high score, although there is a lot of agriculture in the lower reach of the river with a little vegetative buffer. There was little trash seen along the river and most of it seemed to be a result of flooding events. There were some tires in the river, but for the most part they were little visible trash.



The Chessie Trail winds along the river for about 7 miles. This rail trail allows for visual access to the river, while providing walking and biking opportunities. There are several narrow or dirt roads that parallel the river as well, but none of them have significant impacts on the river experience. Although there is an active rail line along several parts of the river, the number of trains is few and the visual impact is not great. Occasionally an impact from the ballast of the railroad creates a negative visual impact. The only other sign of development are the bridges and powerline crossings. For the entire 21.1 river miles there are 19 bridges, trestles and large transmission lines. Fortunately the impacts of these crossings are minimal, due to the meandering corridor alignment and the crossings being perpendicular to the river.

The long views and forested slopes create a terrific backdrop for river travelers, especially in the fall when the autumn colors reflect off the relatively flat water. Cliffs and rock outcroppings along with multiple islands, cultural sites, rock formations and primitive mature forest areas create interest and a feeling of remoteness and isolation along the corridor. The aesthetic appeal is in the moderate to high range.



Public river access is reasonable, although separated by lengthy stretches that make for long days paddling from one site to another. Most of the public access sites along this section of the river have a separation distance of approximately 10 miles. There are few outfitters that can provide shuttle help or guided trips that make access to the river easy. There are water trail maps at <https://dwr.virginia.gov/waterbody/maury-river/#maps> and <https://www.findyourchesapeake.com/places/trails/maury-river-water-trail>.

This section of the Maury has only a few properties in land conservation.

Based on the evaluation, the overall score for the proposed Maury River extension in Rockbridge County, the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista, and the Town of Glasgow meets the minimum score for designation; therefore, **it is recommended that the newly studied 23.1 miles of the Maury River be submitted for designation and added to the existing designated of the river. This additional mileage will bring the designated Maury River length to 42.35 miles.**



THE PROPOSED CODE OF VIRGINIA CHANGE FOLLOWS:

§ 10.1-418.10. Maury State Scenic River.

The Maury River in Rockbridge County through the Cities of Lexington and Buena Vista and the Town of Glasgow from its origination at the confluence of the Calfpasture and Little Calfpasture Rivers to Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom on Route 634 the confluence of the James River, a distance of approximately 19.2542.35 miles, is hereby designated as the Maury State Scenic River, a component of the Virginia Scenic Rivers System.

ATTACHEMENTS:

- MAP OF SECTION

Legend

- Maury_River_Studied

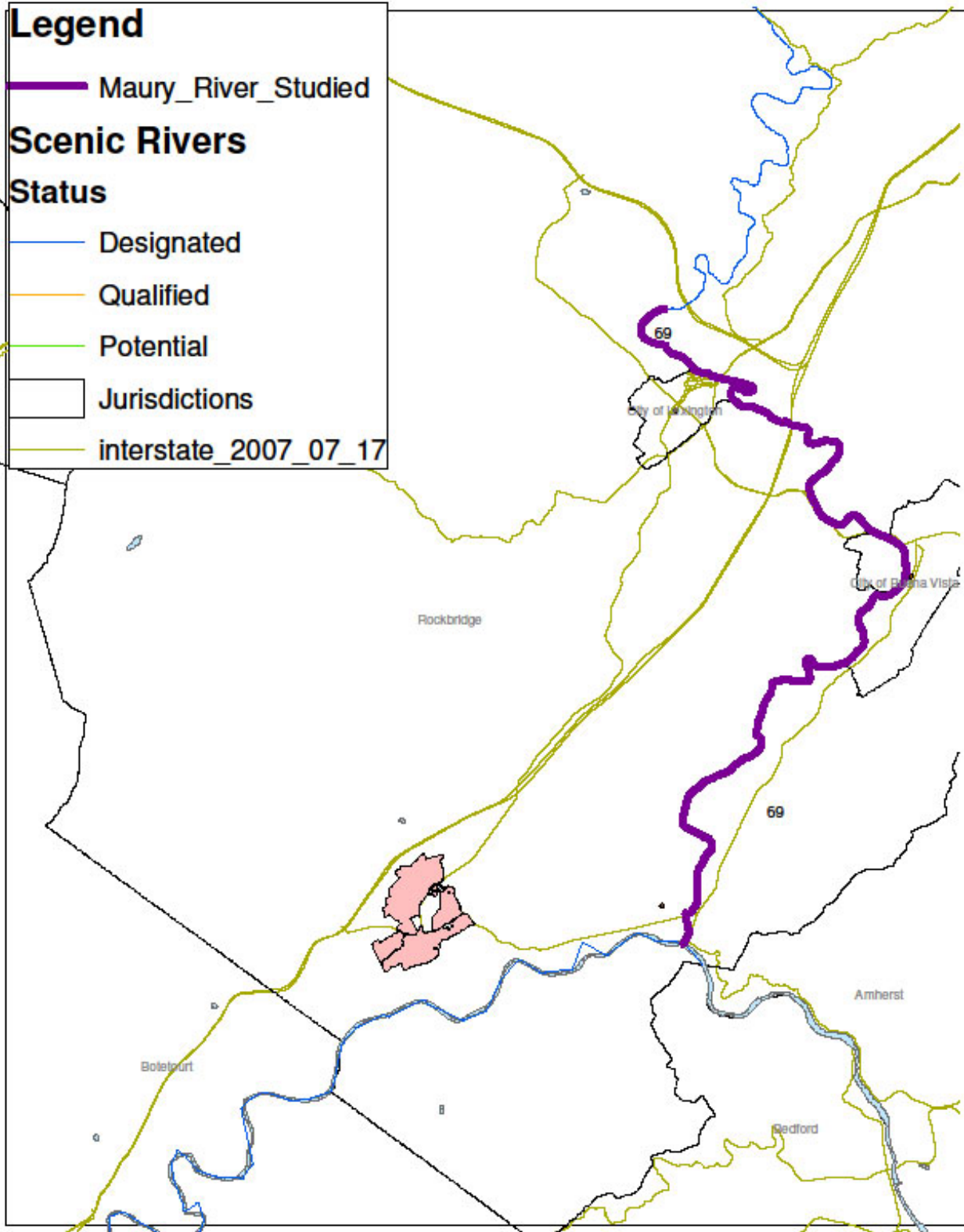
Scenic Rivers

Status

- Designated
- Qualified
- Potential

Jurisdictions

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RESOLUTION R21-16

**RESOLUTION TO REQUEST A PORTION OF THE MAURY RIVER BE
DESIGNATED AS A VIRGINIA SCENIC RIVER**

WHEREAS, the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program was enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1970 for the purpose of identification and preservation of certain rivers, or sections of rivers, which possess high quality natural beauty; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has been charged with administering the Scenic Rivers Program and developing an objective evaluation process to judge the suitability of river segments; and,

WHEREAS, the upper Maury River from the confluence of the Calfpasture and Little Calfoasture Rivers to the Rt. 631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom was designated as a Virginia Scenic River by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2020; and,

WHEREAS, staff from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation visited the lower Maury River, from the Rt.631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom to its confluence with the James River in the Town of Glasgow, and evaluated its eligibility for Scenic River designation; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation completed its evaluation of the lower Maury River as described above and determined that it qualifies as a Virginia Scenic River; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation supports the endorsement for designation of this section of the Maury River as a Virginia Scenic River.

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AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF GLASGOW, VIRGINIA,
HELD AT THE ROCKBRIDGE REGIONAL LIBRARY ON APRIL 13, 2021

Resolution to Request a Portion of the

Maury River be Designated as a Virginia Scenic River

WHEREAS, the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program was enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1970 for the purpose of identification and preservation of certain rivers, or sections of rivers, which possess high quality natural beauty; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has been charged with administering the Scenic Rivers Program and developing an objective evaluation process to judge the suitability of river segments; and,

WHEREAS, the upper Maury River from the confluence of the Calfpasture and Little Calfpasture Rivers to the Rt. 631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom was designated as a Virginia Scenic River by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2020; and,

WHEREAS staff from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation visited the lower Maury River, from the Rt.631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom to its confluence with the James River in the Town of Glasgow, and evaluated its eligibility for Scenic River designation; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation completed its evaluation of the lower Maury River as described above and determined that it qualifies as a Virginia Scenic River; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation supports the endorsement for designation of this section of the Maury River as a Virginia Scenic River.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Glasgow Town Council does hereby support the designation of the Maury River from the Rt.631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom to its confluence with the James River in the Town of Glasgow as a Virginia Scenic River; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the Honorable Senator Creigh Deeds and the Honorable Delegate Ronnie Campbell serve as patrons for the legislation that will codify the Scenic River designation.

Adopted that 13th day of April, 2021.

Recorded Vote:
AYES:
NAYES:
ABSENT:

GLASGOW TOWN COUNCIL

By: *Shane Watts*
Shane Watts, Mayor

Attest: *George Hayfield*
George Hayfield, Clerk

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE LEXINGTON CITY COUNCIL, VIRGINIA, THURSDAY,
OCTOBER 21, 2021

Resolution to Request That a Portion of the
Maury River be Designated as a Virginia Scenic River

WHEREAS, the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program was enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1970 for the purpose of identification and preservation of certain rivers, or sections of rivers, which possess high quality natural beauty; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has been charged with administering the Scenic Rivers Program and developing an objective evaluation process to judge the suitability of river segments; and

WHEREAS, the upper Maury River from the confluence of the Calfpasture and Little Calfpasture Rivers to the Rt. 631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom was designated as a Virginia Scenic River by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2020; and

WHEREAS, staff from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation visited the lower Maury River, from the Rt. 631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom to its confluence with the James River in the Town of Glasgow, and evaluated its eligibility for Scenic River designation; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation completed its evaluation of the lower Maury River as described above and determined that it qualifies as a Virginia Scenic River; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation supports the endorsement for designation of this section of the Maury River as a Virginia Scenic River.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lexington City Council does hereby support the designation of the Maury River from the Rt. 631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom to its confluence with the James River in the Town of Glasgow as a Virginia Scenic River.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lexington City Council hereby requests that the Honorable Senator Creigh Deeds and the Honorable Delegate Ronnie Campbell serve as patrons for the legislation that will codify the Scenic River designation.

Adopted the 21st day of October, 2021.

Recorded Vote:

AYES: Alexander, Aligood, Ayers, Sigler, Smith, Straughan

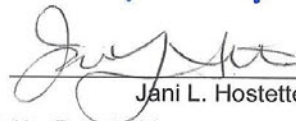
NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Lexington City Council



Frank W. Friedman, Mayor



Jani L. Hostetter, City Clerk

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA, HELD AT THE ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021

Resolution to Request a Portion of the

Maury River be Designated as a Virginia Scenic River

WHEREAS, the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program was enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1970 for the purpose of identification and preservation of certain rivers, or sections of rivers, which possess high quality natural beauty; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has been charged with administering the Scenic Rivers Program and developing an objective evaluation process to judge the suitability of river segments; and,

WHEREAS, the upper Maury River from the confluence of the Calfpasture and Little Calfpasture Rivers to the Rt. 631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom was designated as a Virginia Scenic River by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2020; and,

WHEREAS staff from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation visited the lower Maury River, from the Rt. 631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom to its confluence with the James River in the Town of Glasgow, and evaluated its eligibility for Scenic River designation; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation completed its evaluation of the lower Maury River as described above and determined that it qualifies as a Virginia Scenic River; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation supports the endorsement for designation of this section of the Maury River as a Virginia Scenic River.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors does hereby support the designation of the Maury River from the Rt. 631 – Furrs Mill Road bridge in Beans Bottom to its confluence with the James River in the Town of Glasgow as Virginia Scenic River; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the Honorable Senator Creigh Deeds and the Honorable Delegate Ronnie Campbell serve as patrons for the legislation that will codify the Scenic River designation.


Adopted that 12th day of October, 2021.

Recorded Vote:

AYES: McDaniel, Day, Ayers, Lewis, Lyons
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

By: 
Daniel E. Lyons, Chairman

Attest: 
Spencer H. Suter, Clerk