

## OUR ORGANIZATION



The **Friends of the Appomattox River (FAR)** was established in 1997. FAR is a non-profit corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The mission of the Friends of the Appomattox River is to preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Appomattox River watershed by promoting stewardship, education, responsible recreation and improved river access. These goals are accomplished by a dedicated group of volunteers.

The Friends of the Appomattox River and the Town of Farmville are working together to promote and protect the Farmville Blueway. If you would like to be part of this project or would like more information, visit our websites at [www.FAR-VA.org](http://www.FAR-VA.org) or [www.FarmvilleVA.com](http://www.FarmvilleVA.com).

Education - Conservation - Recreation

# THE FARMVILLE BLUEWAY



A cooperative project by:  
**Friends of the Appomattox River**  
**Town of Farmville**

2014

## THE FARMVILLE BLUEWAY

A blueway is a protected stream corridor managed for conservation and recreation. The Farmville Blueway includes portions of Wilck's Lake, Buffalo Creek, and the Appomattox River. The 4-mile water trail may be paddled in its entirety or in two stages - the Upper Blueway or Lower Blueway.

The Farmville Blueway is rich in natural and human history. It will provide the paddler with opportunities for recreation, wildlife observation, historic discovery, and quiet contemplation. Wildlife and historic structures may be seen throughout the waterway.



The Farmville Blueway is intended to connect the public with the natural world and increase awareness of watersheds and their importance. Making these waterways accessible to canoeists and kayakers will help ensure their preservation by fostering a sense of stewardship among their users.

Visit us online at [www.FAR-VA.com](http://www.FAR-VA.com) or [www.FarmvilleVA.com](http://www.FarmvilleVA.com)

## PADDLING TRAILS

### Upper Blueway

(Estimated paddling time 1.25 hours)

Launch at the boat ramp on the east end of Wilck's Lake, paddle past the island to the southwest corner of the lake, portage across the embankment where marked, enter Buffalo Creek, and paddle downstream to the take-out above the Third Street Bridge.



### Lower Blueway

(Estimated paddling time 1.50 hours)

Launch on Buffalo Creek above the Third Street Bridge and paddle downstream to the boat ramp take-out at Riverside Park. There is a small dam on the Appomattox River as you approach downtown Farmville. Scout the dam before attempting to cross. The dam may be crossed on its left side if the water level is adequate. If not, you may portage through the woods around its left side. To avoid the dam entirely, turn left into the canal shortly after entering the Appomattox River. The canal is shallow so boats may need to be pulled in places.

Signs are strategically located along the Blueway at the west portage to Buffalo Creek, the creek side access above the Third Street Bridge and the take-out at Riverside Park.



# FARMVILLE HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Farmville Blueway corridor has stories to tell. Along this route, Native Americans camped on a dwelling mound, former slaves found freedom working the river in bateaux, the Farmville and Powhatan narrow-gauge railroad attempted to replace the Appomattox River as a means of transport, and a dam was constructed to provide power for a local grain mill.

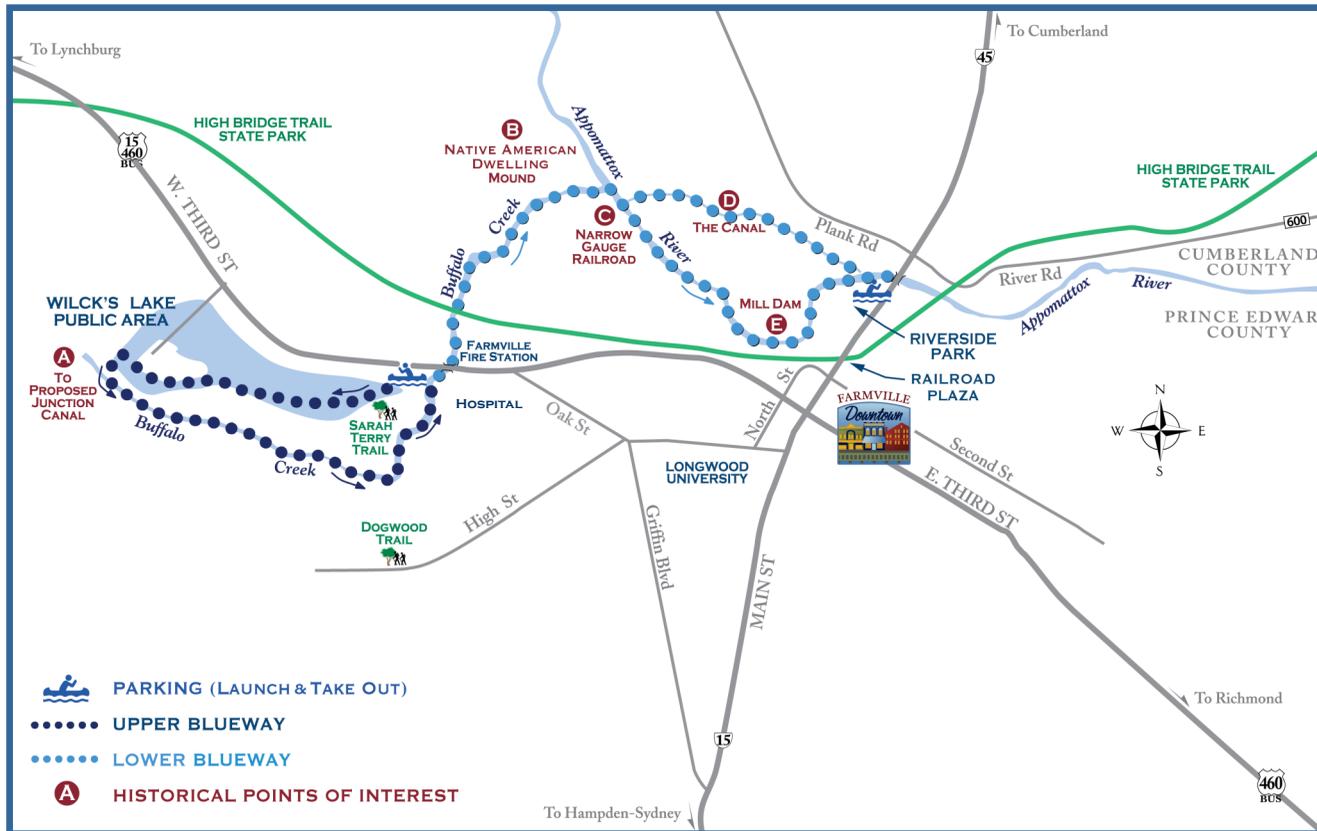


## (A) Junction Canal

It may be hard to imagine today, but the Appomattox River was an important transportation route in the development of Farmville. During the days of water-oriented commerce, bateaux were used to move products up and down the river. The Upper Appomattox River Navigation Company was incorporated in 1795 to support this river commerce. In its heyday, it completed navigation improvements along 120 miles of river, from the Great Falls at Petersburg to Planterstown, 23 miles upstream of Farmville. In 1825 the Junction Canal Company was incorporated for a still more ambitious project: the construction of a canal and tunnel that would connect Buffalo Creek with Roanoke Creek and the Roanoke (Staunton) River. This plan would have opened Farmville and Petersburg to the trade of the Roanoke River Valley. Although it is shown on some maps, the canal was never built.

## (B) Native American Dwelling Mound

Near the confluence of Buffalo Creek and the Appomattox River is a Native American dwelling mound that gives voice to prehistoric peoples who hunted and gathered in the river valley 8,000 to 300 years ago. The dwelling mound has yielded a number of artifacts from the earliest inhabitants of Farmville. Items such as projectile points, a stone



axe head, and pieces of pottery have been discovered there. Some of the large pottery fragments show the marks left behind by the hands that created them.

## (C) Narrow-Gauge Railroad

Chartered in 1884 by a group of local businessmen, the Farmville & Powhatan Railroad was a narrow-gauge track running from Farmville to Bermuda Hundred on the James River. The 92-mile-long railroad was completed in 1890. The line was never prosperous (it was given the nickname "the Faith & Poverty") and was shut down in

1915 when better roads and gasoline powered vehicles provided an alternative source of transportation. During World War I the track was dismantled and sold to the French government. An old abutment from the F & P Bridge that spanned the Appomattox is still visible on the south side of the river along with the railroad bed leading into Farmville.

## (D & E) The Waterfront and Canal

By 1820 over 3,000 bateaux trips were being made along the Appomattox River every year. Several landings were constructed along Farmville's busy waterfront to

accommodate the bateaux traffic. Tobacco and other products were shipped out of the enormous warehouses built along the river. When Prince Edward Mill was constructed, a wooden crib dam was placed across the Appomattox to harness the power of the river to mill grain. The remains of the dam still exist upstream of the mill. A navigable channel or canal, was dug around the dam from a point 1,000 feet downstream of the dam to a spot just below Buffalo Creek. The canal provided a route around the dam for bateaux using the river.



## Suggested Additional Reading

[Farmville, Virginia, Recalling Our Past: An Illustrated History](#), Longwood Center for the Visual Arts, Farmville, VA, 1999

[The Appomattox River Atlas: Historic Sites on the Appomattox and Its Navigable Branches](#), W.E. Trout, III. Virginia Canal and Navigation Society, Virginia, 2003

