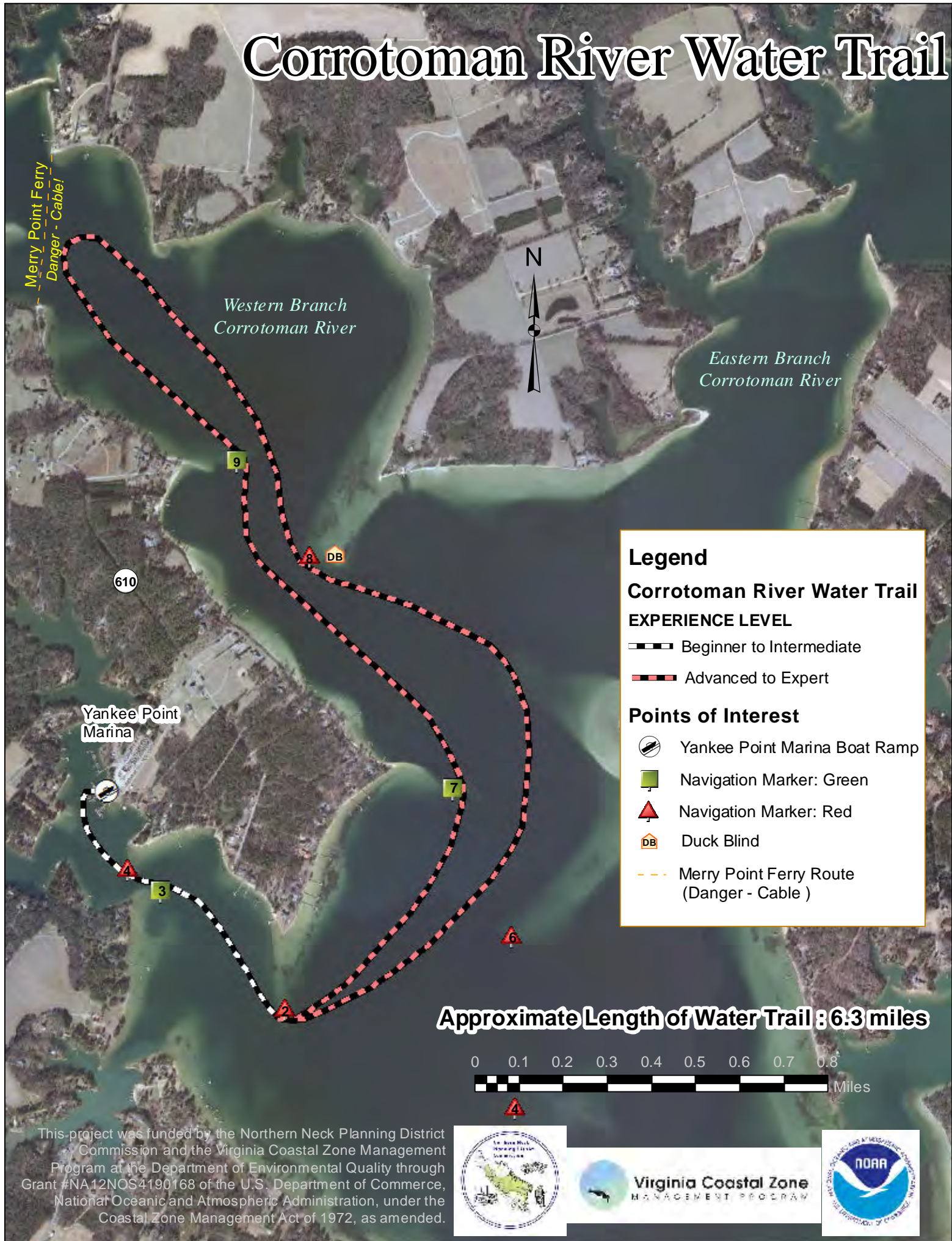


Corrotoman River Water Trail



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Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



The majority of the Corrotoman River Water Trail is intended for intermediate to advanced paddlers due to the large open water of the Corrotoman River.

The Corrotoman River meets the Rappahannock River upstream from the State Rt. 3 Robert E. Norris Bridge. The Corrotoman River splits in two prongs approximately 3.5 miles from the mouth of the river, with the Eastern Branch headwaters being near the village of Lively and the Western Branch headwaters being near the Town of Kilmarnock.



If you paddle the Corrotoman River in November, it is likely you will see a boat like the one on the left, a Chesapeake dead rise wooden work boat outfitted to pull an oyster dredge. Oysters were most valuable fishery in the Chesapeake Bay until the 1980s. Two oyster diseases, MSX and Dermo, killed off most of the Bay oysters in the 1980s. Today, through oyster restoration efforts and a rotational harvest system on the Lower Rappahannock, oysters are making a comeback. The most recent Virginia oyster harvest numbers for the October 2012 to March 2013 season surpassed 405,000 bushels. It was the third straight increase, almost double the 2011-12 harvest, and the highest total in a quarter-century.

On the Eastern Branch of the Corrotoman River, the Merry Point Ferry crosses the river connecting Merry Point Road with Ottoman Ferry Road. When operating, the ferry saves approximately one-half hour of commuting time for residents of the peninsula. The Merry Point Ferry in Lancaster County is one of the last two remaining Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) operated free cable ferries in the state (the other one is located on the Little Wicomico River in Northumberland County and called Sunnybank Ferry. The Merry Point Ferry began operation in 1847 and was operated privately until 1930 when VDOT took over its operation.



Merry Point Ferry (approx. 1950s)
Note deadrise boat attached to the ferry for propulsion

Merry Point and Sunnybank ferries were powered by deadrise workboats tied to each ferry until 1985 when two replacement steel-hulled two-car ferries were built in a Deltaville boatyard for a little under \$300,000. Those ferries were powered by an onboard engine that pulled the ferry along steel cables that stretched between the shore. When the ferry boat is in operation, the steel cable is pulled up off the bottom, run through rollers powered by the engine, and then the cable drops back to the bottom of the river behind the ferry boat. In 2010, VDOT replaced both two-car ferries with four-car ferries at a cost of \$500,000, which is considerably less than the millions of dollars required to build a bridge at the two ferry locations.



Merry Point Ferry in 2000.

Care must be exercised when operating a watercraft near the Merry Point Ferry when it is in operation. The steel cable rises and falls when the ferry crosses the river, so a vessel operator needs to be either a few hundred yards upstream or downstream from the ferry crossing to be sure to be clear of the transit cable to allow safe operation of the ferry. The Merry Point Ferry hours of operation are listed on the VDOT website and are from 7 am to 5:30 pm Tue. through Fri. and 9 am to 5:30 pm on Sat. The ferry does not operate on Sunday or Monday. For more information go to http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/merry_point_ferry.asp

Directions to Yankee Point Marina:

From the village of Lancaster in Lancaster County, follow Rt. 3 westbound approximately 3 miles to the village of Lively. Turn left onto Rt. 201, White Chapel Road, and continue to the end, approximately 3.2 miles. Take a left onto Rt. 354, River Road, and continue approximately 3.6 miles and take a left at Rt. 604, Ottoman Ferry Road. Travel 1.6 miles on Rt. 604 then turn right onto Rt. 610, Oak Hill Rd., and follow it 0.9 miles, bear right to stay on Rt. 610, Oak Hill Rd., to reach Yankee Point Marina. The website for Yankee Point Marina is: www.yankeepointmarina.com

Note: These driving directions are for when the ferry is NOT in operation.

