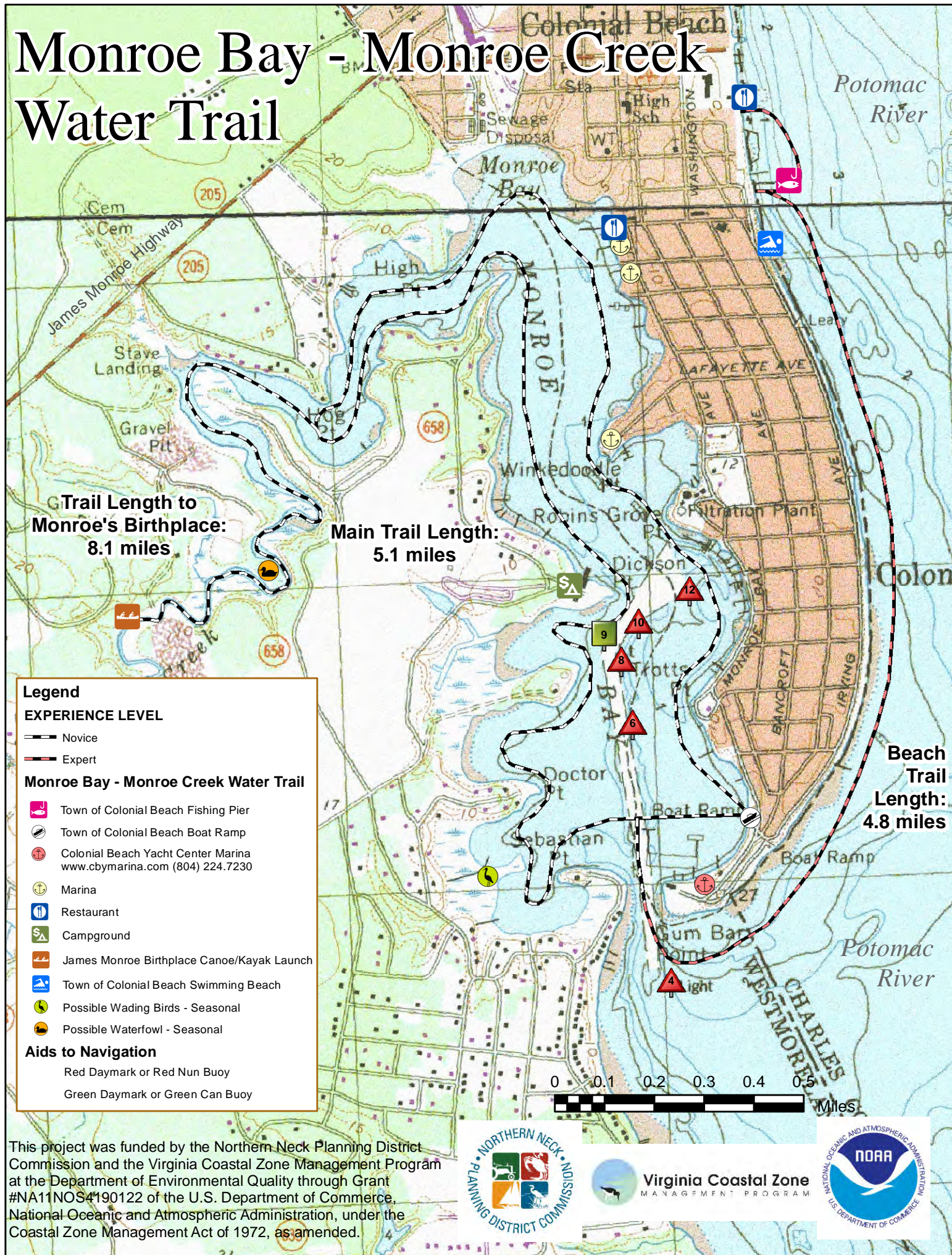


Monroe Bay - Monroe Creek Water Trail



This project was funded by the Northern Neck Planning District Commission and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality through Grant #NA11NOS4190122 of the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended.



Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Monroe Bay - Monroe Creek Water Trail

Potomac River


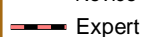
Trail Length to
Monroe's Birthplace:
8.1 miles

Main Trail Length:
5.1 miles












Beach
Trail
Length:
4.8 miles

Legend

EXPERIENCE LEVEL

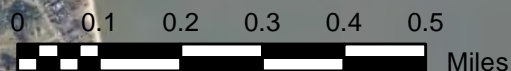
-  Novice
-  Expert

Monroe Bay - Monroe Creek Water Trail

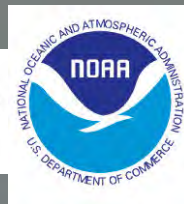
-  Town of Colonial Beach Boat Ramp
-  Colonial Beach Yacht Center
-  Bayside Marina and Restaurant
-  The Lighthouse Restaurant
-  Monroe Bay Marina
-  Monroe Bay Campground
-  Nightingale Marina and Motel
-  Future James Monroe Canoe/Kayak Launch
-  The Riverboat Restaurant and Pier
-  Town of Colonial Beach Fishing Pier
-  Town of Colonial Beach Swimming Beach

Aids to Navigation

- Red Daymark or Red Nun Buoy
- Green Daymark or Green Can Buoy



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The Monroe Bay portion of this water trail is suitable for novice paddlers while the outer loop beach water trail (Potomac River portion) is intended for expert paddlers due to the potential exposure to wind and waves in that area.

Monroe Bay, and especially Monroe Creek, is shielded from large waves from the Potomac River and thus is recommended for less experienced paddlers. The Potomac River is approximately four miles wide at Colonial Beach, and when the wind blows, large waves often form and crash on the shores of Colonial Beach. These large waves make it difficult to navigate small vessels such as canoes and/or kayaks without capsizing.

In addition, Monroe Bay, especially near the entrance to the Bay in the summer, can get congested with power boat traffic. Small vessels should maintain distance between large powerboats as the large wakes generated by them can be hazardous. In addition, personal watercraft may be operated in these waters and should also be avoided due to the high speeds they can achieve.

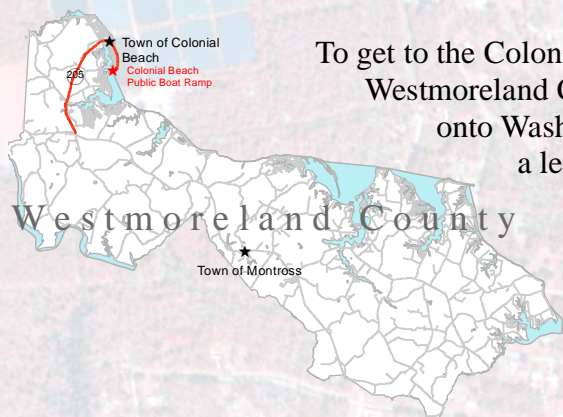
Paddlers need to consider the possibility of hypothermia when paddling in colder water temperatures. Paddling with others is strongly encouraged, as is a dry change of clothes in case of accidental immersion. Other recommendations for safety are a cell phone and marine VHF radio for contacting help, should it become necessary.

Boaters also need to be in compliance with Virginia boating equipment regulations by wearing a personal flotation devices, sound producing devices, and visual distress signals. More information can be found here:
<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/boating/wog/equipment-regulations.asp>



Near the upper reaches of Monroe Creek, James Monroe's Birthplace has a rudimentary dock in place. This dock was completed by a Boy Scout for his Eagle Scout project, and is usable in its current form although it is narrow and short for a public pier. Westmoreland County has secured a grant from VDOT to build a road and trail system at James Monroe's Birthplace that will replace the old trail to the canoe dock. Westmoreland hopes to obtain additional grant funding to replace the existing dock with a larger dock and und retrieving point. More information, as well as seasonal closings and hours of operation, is located here: <http://www.monroefoundation.org/monroe-birthplace.html>

In the upper reaches of Monroe Creek, you will likely see blue herons, various species of ducks, as well as other birds such as the smaller green heron and if you are very observant, the quick flying and often diving kingfisher. Other winged creatures that could be spotted, depending on the time of year, are mallard, wood, or bufflehead ducks. In addition to waterfowl, Monroe Bay is home to many fish species. Catfish can be found year round, and in the early spring, striped bass and croaker are among the first species to arrive in large numbers. Later in the spring, spot, puppy drum, and an occasional bluefish can be caught by skilled anglers. For those who desire more amenities, the western shore of the Colonial Beach peninsula has several restaurants and overnight accommodations. On the Potomac River side of the water trail is the swimming beach and fishing pier for expert paddlers.



To get to the Colonial Beach Public Boat Ramp, travel to the Town of Colonial Beach in Westmoreland County on Rt. 205. Turn on to Colonial Avenue (Rt. 205Y), turn right onto Washington Avenue, take a slight left onto North Irving Avenue, then take a left onto Boundary Street. Take the 1st right onto South Irving Avenue. Follow to the end of the South Irving Avenue, looping around onto Monroe Bay Road. The Colonial Beach Public Boat Ramp is located on the left after you turn onto Monroe Bay Road.