

About the Trail

The River/Red trail of the Siegen Forest provides a unique opportunity to walk in the footsteps of history. As you will walk through the 179-acre forest, you pass the millrace used by the original settlers, Civil War earthworks, five different types of forests, and one of the best river recreation areas in Virginia.

The River/Red trail is about 3.0 miles long, much along the Rapidan River. The trail begins at the Visitor Center. The eastern trailhead is on State route 601 (Flat Run Road) near Route 3 (Germanna Highway). **Note: there is no parking available at this trailhead.**

This is a one-way trail—not a loop trail. Half-mile intervals are marked so you can decide how long your hike will be. If you want a two-mile walk, go to the 1.0 marker and turn around.

After a descent down to the river, the first half of the trail is relatively flat as it follows the river. As you reach the river, there is a picnic area.

The latter half of the trail rises and falls over several 100-foot elevation changes. Footbridges help keep you dry from the tributaries of the millrace and other wet areas.

Thank you for visiting the Germanna Foundation's Siegen Forest. Conservation of this beautiful area and maintenance of our property and trails depends on generous donations from visitors like you. If you enjoy your visit, please consider making a tax deductible donation to the Germanna Foundation today.

Trail Rules and Safety Guidelines

Vehicles may park in marked parking spaces only. There is no general public boat access to the river, and there are no restroom facilities along the trails. All visitors must adhere to “pack it in, pack it out” practices.

- Use of metal detectors, digging, or removal or collection of artifacts, materials, plants, or relics is strictly prohibited.
- Help protect our historical resources by staying on the trails. Do not walk on the Civil War earthworks or walk on or move rocks at any historical building or cemetery sites.
- Do not drink water from streams or the river.
- Wear insect repellent and appropriate clothing and shoes. Beware of poison ivy, chiggers, ticks, and snakes. Foxes, bears and even a coyote have been reported in the Forest.
- Picnicking is allowed at the established area(s). No overnight camping and no fires are allowed, except for Scouts and other organized and supervised groups, and only with advance written permission from the Foundation.
- Bicycles, motorized vehicles, and horses are not permitted on the trails. Dogs are allowed if leashed and all solid waste must be picked up and packed out.
- Although hunting in Siegen Forest is illegal, exercise caution and wear bright colors during hunting season.
- Beware of trail hazards and uneven surfaces. Wear sturdy shoes or boots.
- Road traces and animal trails crisscross the area. To stay on the trail, follow the map carefully and look for the 2” x 6” colored blazes (trail markings) on the trees.
- A single blaze indicates you are on the path. A double blaze indicates the trail changes direction. The blazes are spaced so you should see the next one as you pass a blaze.
- Trails are open during daylight hours, year-round. To help protect our trails and property, please remove/replace the yellow chain across our access road as you come and go.

RIVER/RED TRAIL

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The first section of the trail starts at the Visitor center, down the hill, and between the millrace (up the hill on your left) and the river. This is a bottomland hardwood forest. Note the large trees of this part of the forest, many reaching out over the river or the millrace to soak in the sunlight needed for their growth.

This is the area Alexander Spotswood used for mills and river transportation for the Virginia Germanna Colonies starting in 1714.

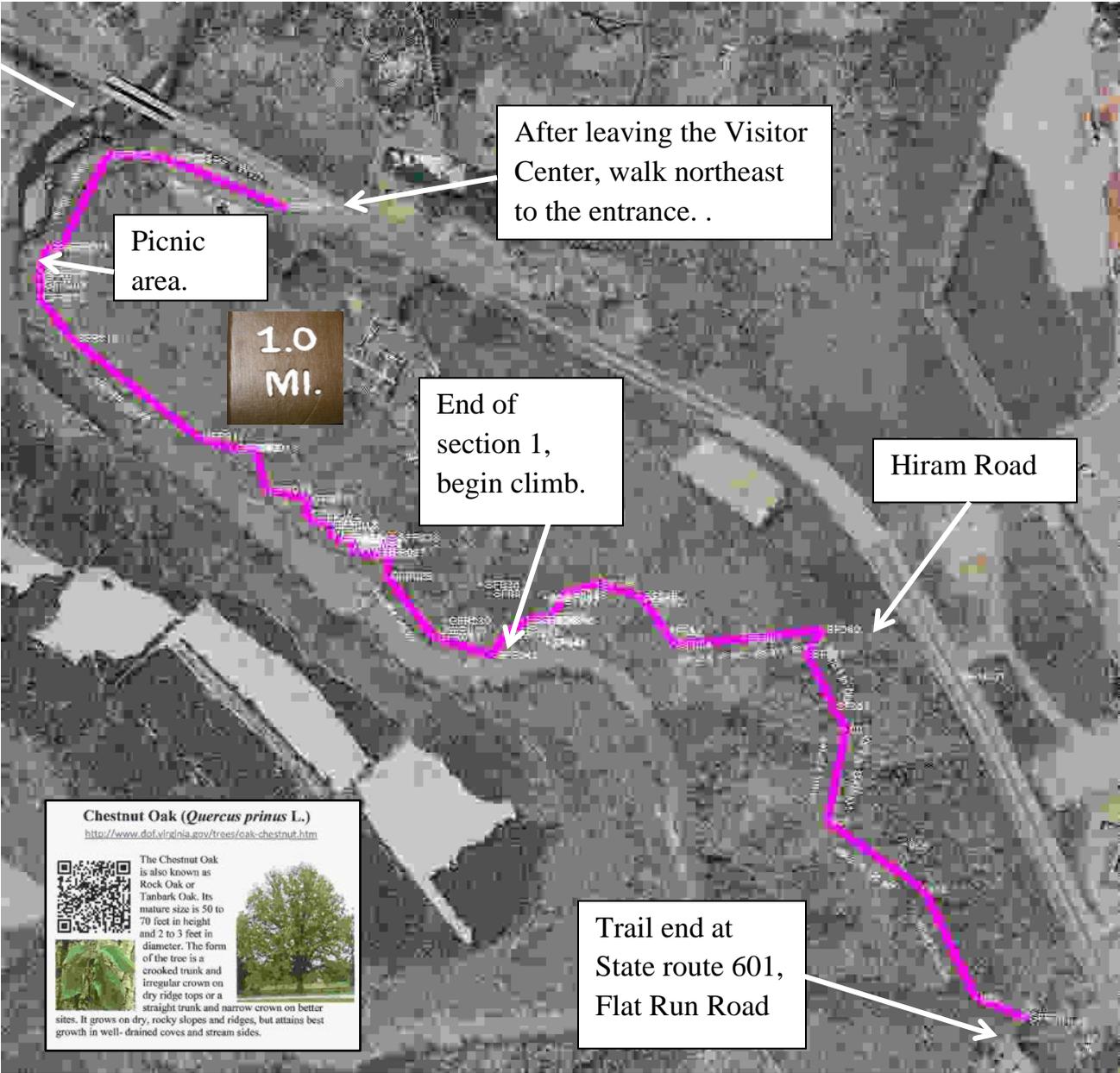
The second section (mixed hardwood and conifer forest with Virginia Pines) turns north because very high, huge stone bluffs come right up to the river—blocking easy access to the riverbank. Later you will be able to stand on these rock platforms to view the beautiful river vista. There are several steep hills. Part of the trail uses the Hiram Road off Route 3. (There is no public access to Hiram Road.)

The third section traverses the southeast portion of the forest. This is a combination of Virginia Pines and Chestnut Oak and Pine trees.

Trees are marked with interpretative signs (below center) that contain QR (Quick Reference) codes. Scan these with an I-phone or Android with free software to show you the Virginia Department of Forestry web site for more complete information on the tree.



The heights above the river were ideal for Confederate troops to provide troop and artillery protection for the Germanna Crossing. The Alfred Waud drawing (bottom left) in 1863 shows how it might have been.



Chestnut Oak (*Quercus prinus* L.)
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/trees/oak-chestnut.htm>

The Chestnut Oak is also known as Rock Oak or Tanbark Oak. Its mature size is 50 to 70 feet in height and 2 to 3 feet in diameter. The form of the tree is a crooked trunk and irregular crown on dry ridge tops or a straight trunk and narrow crown on better sites. It grows on dry, rocky slopes and ridges, but attains best growth in well-drained coves and stream sides.