



CHAPTER IV: HIGHLIGHTS
Along the St. Paul Loop

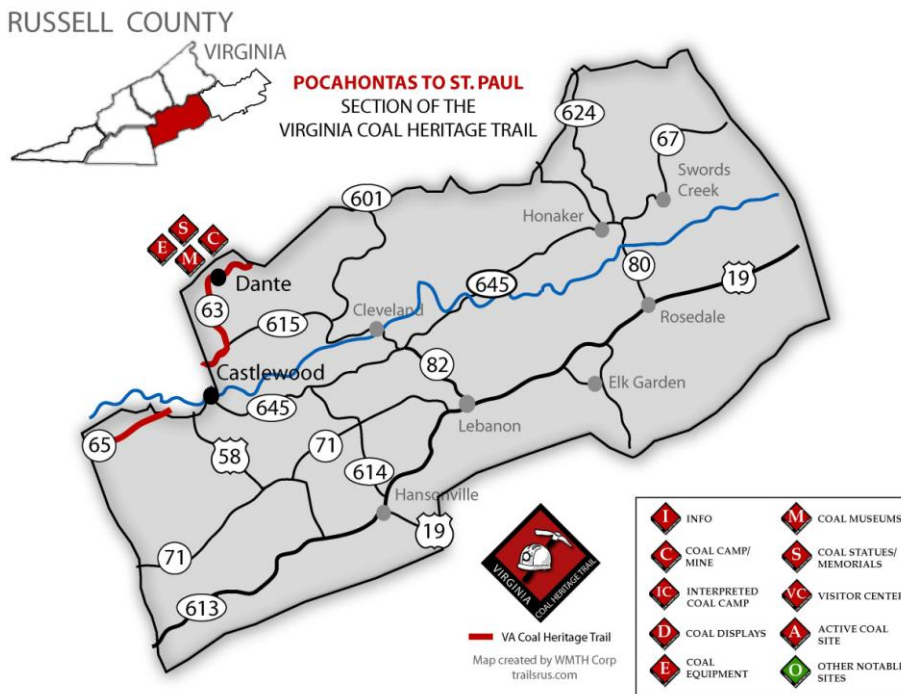


The St. Paul loop travels over 80 miles through the counties of Russell, Scott, Lee and Wise before ending back at St. Paul. As noted earlier, St. Paul holds the distinction of being in both Wise and Russell Counties.

Leaving St. Paul and turning left onto Hwy 58A leads one into Castlewood which is home to the famous Ma & Pa's Drive-In Restaurant, a historic icon in the area. There are other restaurants and lodging along this route. At the second light, turn right onto Virginia Route 65 (Mew Road).



Two miles down the road, watch for the historic marker on the left noting Daniel Boone's two year stay in the area when he commanded Moore's Fort as well as Blackmore's and Cowan's Forts on the Clinch River during Lord Dunmore's War in 1774.



Just past this point, one enters Scott County, a unique portion of the trail that offers primarily farmland and unique historic railroad communities such as the town of Dungannon, established in 1918. Its depot is now the town hall. There is also the St. Patrick Catholic Church made of log, a few other buildings and a historic marker about Patrick Porter, an early pioneer settler in Scott County.



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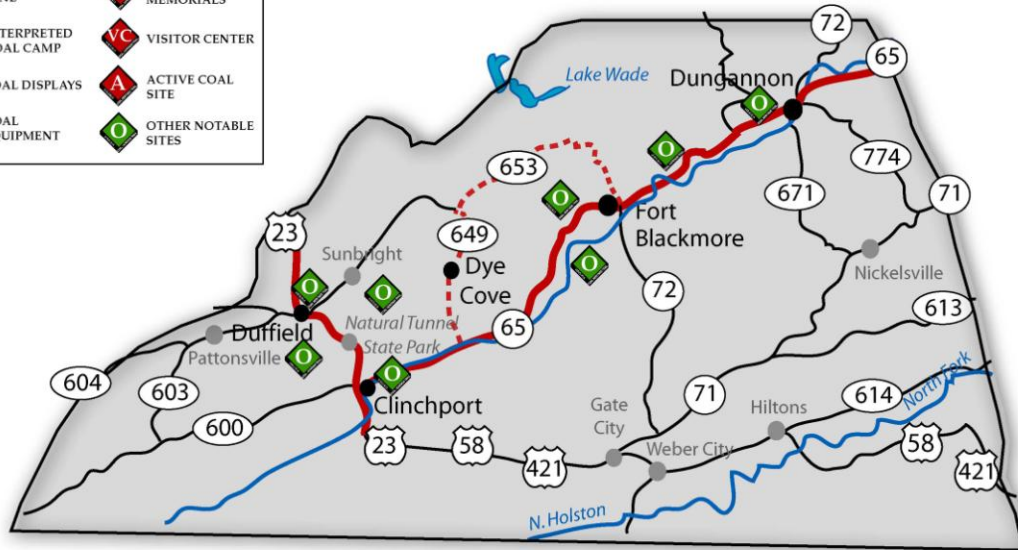


ST. PAUL LOOP SECTION OF THE VIRGINIA COAL HERITAGE TRAIL

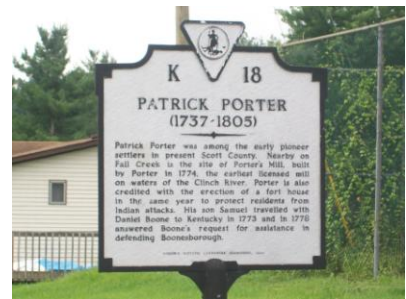


VA Coal Heritage Trail
Map created by WMTH Corp
trailsrus.com

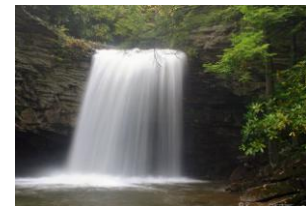
I INFO	M COAL MUSEUMS
C COAL CAMP/ MINE	S COAL STATUES/ MEMORIALS
IC INTERPRETED COAL CAMP	VC VISITOR CENTER
D COAL DISPLAYS	A ACTIVE COAL SITE
E COAL EQUIPMENT	O OTHER NOTABLE SITES



Dungannon was originally called Osborne's Ford but was renamed by Patrick Hagan for his home in Ireland. The railroad came through around 1909 which helped to establish the town.



A worthwhile side trip while in Dungannon is Hanging Rock Park where one can view the 24 foot falls of the Little Stony.



Scott County Horse Park

Continuing on Hwy 65, one will pass the Scott County Horse Park which is the site of many equestrian events throughout the year.

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There are also numerous farms along this route. Be sure to watch for this unique farm with painted barns and farm equipment.

While traveling along Route 65, one will pass the General John Salling Monument in honor of Virginia's last surviving confederate veteran and resident of Scott County. General Salling died in March of 1959 at the age of 112.



Route 65 follows the Clinch River. *The Clinch River is noted as one of the most ecological diverse rivers in the United States. The Clinch River flows 135 miles through Southwest Virginia and into Tennessee where it ends at the Tennessee River.*

Also following the river is the CSX railroad formally known as the Carolina, Clinchfield, and Ohio Railroad. This railroad, in addition to the aforementioned Norfolk Southern line, provided avenues of commerce through Scott County to move coal, timber, and freight products from the region.

Continuing west on Route 65, one passes Fort Blackmore. Once a booming town, Fort Blackmore was moved after the flood of 1977. During the flood the waters of Big Stony Creek and the Clinch River were approximately 6-7 ft deep in the stores. The town was bought out which allowed for highway improvements. As noted earlier, Fort Blackmore originally was one of the forts Daniel Boone commanded while the militiamen were engaged in the Point Pleasant campaign of Dunmore's war.

Fort Blackmore United Methodist Church and the Farmer's Market are nearly all that remains to let people know a town once was here and, due to all the farming in the area, has become a thriving business during the growing season.



Continuing westward on Hwy 65, one passes Rye Cove Wildlife Viewing Area and a few homes and churches. Just past this point is all that remains of a once thriving rivertown called Clinchport. A catastrophic flood in 1977 took out the entire town. Remains of the town blocks can still be seen today.



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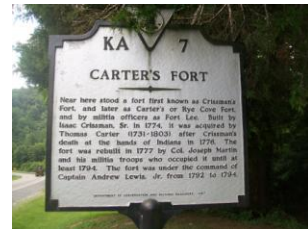
One then passes under the CSX Railroad Trestle. This trestle represents one of two major railway lines hauling coal out of Southwest Virginia to Southeastern U.S. power plants. Turn right onto Hwy 23N, just past the Clinchport boat access.



Two miles after turning onto Hwy 23N, one comes to the entrance road to Natural Tunnel State Park. Natural Tunnel State Park is home of the 850 foot natural tunnel that provided a way through to the coal fields beginning in 1890 and continues today. Natural Tunnel State Park has seven walking trails. The longest is 2.1 miles long. The trails lead to unique features of the park: the tunnel floor, Lover's Leap, Tunnel Hill and Gorge Ridge.

A 500-foot boardwalk and observation deck provide accessibility to guests with disabilities who may ride the chairlift, when operable, to the mouth of the tunnel. Most trails are open to mountain bikes. There is also a lodge, cabins and campgrounds for overnight stays.

Continuing on Hwy 23, historic marker marks the site of Carter's Fort established in 1774 which also was known both as Rye Cove Fort and Fort Lee.



As one comes to the intersection of Route 58/421/23, one sees the Fannon Railroad Museum located in a depot built and used in the movie "Coal Miner's Daughter". It contains some of the props from the movie set but also includes a huge collection of railroad memorabilia in both the depot, in the caboose and in the home next door. The collection is amazing and a "must stop" for any railroad enthusiast.

To the right of the intersection are monuments and interpretive signs noting that the Town of Duffield is on both the Daniel Boone Trail and the Crooked Road Music Trail.

Duffield is the smallest incorporated city in the state of Virginia with less than 65 residents.

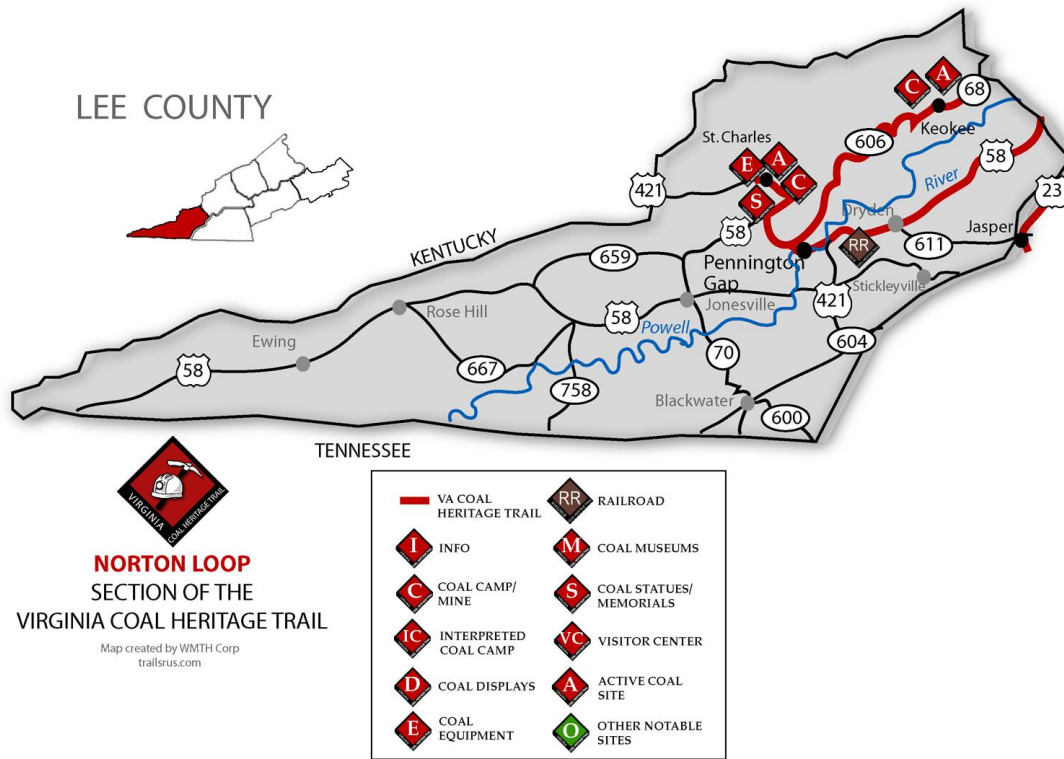


Continuing on Hwy 23/58A, one will pass by Big Stone Gap and Norton before exiting onto Hwy 58A and traveling past Tacoma, Coeburn, Virginia City before ending back at St. Paul.



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Please note, the traveler is in and out of Lee County in a blink of an eye when they take the St. Paul Loop. Just a few miles in Lee County on Hwy 23 and one will quickly find themselves in Wise County. The majority of the trail through Lee County follows the Norton Loop along VA 58, 68 and 606.

