

Speaker 1: Hello and welcome to the Decipher Podcast. This podcast is hosted by William & Mary staff members who are committed to student success. We all know that this year has been unlike any other. And our hope is that this podcast provides for a fresh perspective on the challenges our students are facing.

Speaker 2: Navigating college life is no walk in the park and being a William & Mary student in 2020 is no different. Join experts from around campus as they discuss ways to decipher common college experiences.

Shelly Laurenzo: [00:00:30] Hi friends, and welcome to a new episode of the Decipher Podcast. Today, I'm joined by Lauren and Heather. And as the weather has been getting nicer outside, we've been talking about different things to do in the Williamsburg community. So, our conversation today is going to be focused around things to do in Williamsburg, outside of [00:01:00] the direct campus area. So, Hey, Lauren and Heather.

Heather Deere: Hello. I'm excited about this conversation because I, myself, know very little about what there is to do outdoors in Williamsburg. So, I'm excited to learn today.

Shelly Laurenzo: Great.

Lauren Garrett: Hey, everyone. I, too, am excited about the conversation because I feel like my take on Williamsburg is so different now as a, quote, "adult", versus when I was a student. And so, the things that were [00:01:30] around and available then, now exist, or didn't exist then, and now exists. So, it feels a little odd to be like, "What did I do?" And I think my extent of fun, springtime frivolity was literally finding an upper level student who had a car driving towards the ferry, and we would literally take the ferry over to Surrey, and then turn right back around and hop on the ferry and come back.

Shelly Laurenzo: I will say the joys of riding [00:02:00] the ferry are for every age group, right? I've got two young boys. They love it. I love it. I don't think that the joy of driving a car on a boat ever goes away. I think that's just always fun. So, yes, I agree with Lauren. If you, as a student, have a car, maybe see if some fellow vaccinated friends want to ride with you, or mask up, that could be a good opportunity to get out [00:02:30] and explore the larger Williamsburg area. So, as I shared, I do have young boys, and so we are frequently hitting up the parks around Williamsburg. So, I am chock full of recommendations for different outdoor activities to do in the Williamsburg area. For folks that like to walk or ride bikes, there is the Capital Trail that from Jamestown [00:03:00] to Richmond. Now, I'm not recommending that you go all the way to Richmond because that is very far, but that is a route that folks can shake.

It follows route five, essentially, but the Capital Trail is a lot of fun. You see lots of bikers on there, but you also see walkers and runners and people with dogs. So, the Capital Trail is really nice. It's paved, it's separate from the road. So,

there's some distance there. And for folks without a car, you can take the [00:03:30] bus to Jamestown High School and hop off there, and easily access the trail. You can also easily access the Greensprings Interpretive Trail from Jamestown High School as well. And that's a really nice outdoor trail that has lots of information about the flora and fauna you see in that area. So, that could be another nice place to hit up. So, those are some of my recommendations of some different places to go.

Lauren Garrett: So, [00:04:00] a known entity, definitely, most students are obviously already know about Colonial Williamsburg, but making sure that you head into the historic area and run by the ticket office to grab your Collegiate Pass is a necessity.

Shelly Laurenzo: So, living in the Williamsburg area are being a William & Mary student allows folks to have access to Colonial Williamsburg. So, as someone that lives in the James- [00:04:30] Williamsburg, James City County area, my family actually just went the other week to get our good neighbor passes updated. And then for our students, they have access to the Collegiate Pass, so they can explore a little Williamsburg, a little bit more than maybe they have already. Another thing I like to recommend that's within walking distance of campus, again, for students, if they haven't already done this is joining the Williamsburg Regional Library. They have lots of great books and DVDs, things more for fun or entertainment, when you need a little bit of a break from [00:05:00] the reading for school. So, that's another great resource that's within walking distance of campus that students should definitely take advantage of.

Heather Deere: I also think too about spaces on our own campus that maybe students haven't taken the time to explore, or maybe didn't know existed. I've heard a lot this semester that students just weren't super familiar with Matoaka and the amphitheater, prior to this academic year. And I think there are probably places and spaces on our campus [00:05:30] that students haven't gone to before. So, maybe it's even taking the time to be like, "Have I actually ever went down to Lake Matoaka? Have I seen that in person and walked the trail down there? And actually taken the time to take that walk myself?" I think it's, it would be fun to explore areas of campus that maybe students haven't visited in a few years, or just never actually have visited before.

Lauren Garrett: And on that note, I think we should remind folks that the college would have a whole series [00:06:00] of trails that are mapped and can be found on the website. And you don't have to necessarily take part in the Tribe Adventure Program through campus recreation to go on a hike through the woods, while we would definitely encourage it, because they know a whole lot about the area. There isn't... That is open for them to explore on their own. There's also... I'm also thinking about like, this is the chance for students who maybe didn't feel like their schedule [00:06:30] allowed for them in the fall to explore Lake Matoaka itself in terms of the boat house. And I know that that's opening up right now, and I also know that campus recreation is continuing some of their

outdoor campfires, and things of that nature, with the Tribe Adventure Program.

So, at least getting yourself on that listserv, so you know what's happening outdoors to get yourself out of your residence hall room or out [00:07:00] of your house off campus to mix and mingle, COVID appropriately, especially when the weather is so nice. Just seems like a smart... It's a tribe choice. It's a healthy thing to do.

Shelly Laurenzo: Yeah. I think that's a great point, Lauren and Heather, that there's lots of great options on campus. That, again, maybe students just haven't had the opportunity to explore yet. I think for me, the key is really taking advantage of the spring weather that we have here in Williamsburg. It goes from winter to summer really quickly, and we don't [00:07:30] always have a cooler days with low humidity to explore. And so, I think for me, really trying to encourage students to get outside and explore as much as they can while we have these perfect spring temperatures, because again, we're going to blink and it's going to be summer and hot and humid, and it makes it a little bit more difficult to go out and explore these things during that time.

The other thing I wanted to share is, if anyone, if [inaudible 00:07:58] of our students happens to have [00:08:00] a dog, right? There are obviously plenty of great places to walk your four legged loved ones. And there's also a dog park at Waller Mills. So, I believe you have to go online and get them registered. They just want to make sure that they... The dog's been properly vaccinated. But that can be another fun little spring trip, spring outing. If you have a four legged friend to take them to go meet some more four legged friends. So, Waller Mill Dog Park is another place I would recommend.

Lauren Garrett: Oh. And Waller [00:08:30] Mill just has some wonderful outdoor opportunities for pedal boat, not pedal boating.

Shelly Laurenzo: Oh, yeah, the... So, folks at home can't see us, but Lauren and I are pedaling our feet. Our feet, our hands, to replicate feet pedaling. I forget what those boats are called, but I know exactly what you're talking about.

Lauren Garrett: Maybe Heather knows. Heather, do you know what?...

Shelly Laurenzo: Heather, do you know what we're trying to say?

Heather Deere: [00:09:00] I understand what you were trying to say, but I do not know the formal name of those boats.

Shelly Laurenzo: I'll look them up later. That's fine.

Lauren Garrett: But yes, they offer... I feel like they offer not only those types of boats, but I think you can also rent canoes or maybe kayaks from Waller Mill. And they also

have some low-key hiking in that neck of the woods as well. I know a lot of student organizations in non-COVID times would [00:09:30] use Waller Mill as [inaudible 00:09:31] spot for end of your picnics and gatherings. So, something to keep on your radar. And keep in mind that the WATA is for area transportation...

Shelly Laurenzo: Transit Authority?

Lauren Garrett: Thank you. Thank you. The Williamsburg Area Transit Authority. I was like, "I just messed up their name. So sorry, WATA." But that their buses can take you all the way out to Jamestown out towards the outlets, as well as, I think that they do have a few stops [00:10:00] out and about near Waller Mill and some of the parks that we've talked about. So, IDs get you onto the bus system for free. And so... And you can track their bus routes via the William & Mary Mobile App as well. So, it's another good opportunity if you're trying to get yourself out and about for a little bit of RNR away from campus.

Shelly Laurenzo: Awesome. Well, thank you so much, Lauren and Heather, for hopping on today to talk a little bit about things to do in Williamsburg. [00:10:30] So, hopefully, our students will come away with this with some ideas for different things to explore. And those few remaining spring weekends that we have before the end of the semester.

Heather Deere: You know, I got a lot of great ideas myself. So, I'm excited to go explore the great outdoors with my furry friend, Oakley.

Shelly Laurenzo: Awesome. Thanks everyone.

Thank you so much for tuning into this episode of the Decipher [00:11:00] Podcast. For our show notes, please visit our website, Decipher dot blogs dot WM dot EDU. Take care.