

New parking lot will accommodate parkway users

ADDITIONAL PARKING for users of the Saunders-Monticello Trail and other features of the Thomas Jefferson Parkway is scheduled to become available later this year with the completion of a 50-space parking lot off Route 20.

Construction on the \$175,000 project began in July. The lot's opening is expected to help curb overloaded parking conditions at the Kemper Park entrance to the parkway.

Those using the new lot will be able to access the natural area via a pedestrian passageway that runs under Route 53 near its intersection with Route 20.

A temporary gravel parking lot at Kemper Park that has served parkway visitors will be landscaped with grass and trees, leaving behind the original 13-car parking area.

Parking has become an issue in recent years with increasingly popularity of the Thomas Jefferson Parkway, the most heavily visited park in Central Virginia.

Between 1,500 to 2,500 visitors use the linear park and its trails each week, according Parkway Manager Jason Stevens.

"It's a huge success. We're really proud of it," said Peter Hatch, Monticello's director of gardens and grounds.

Within the past year, an additional three miles of trails through Secluded Farm, a 100-acre property to the south of Kemper Park, have been opened to the public.

The new parking lot, accessible to vehicles only from northbound Route 20, is located on a lightly wooded plot of land leased from the University of Virginia.



A pedestrian passageway under Route 53 connects the new parking area and the Thomas Jefferson Parkway.

TJF / Liesel Nowak

A mature Osage orange tree, similar to one of the specimens Lewis and Clark brought back to Virginia after their expedition, will mark the way for visitors heading from the new parking lot through the passageway to the park itself.

The Thomas Jefferson Parkway was developed by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation to serve as a scenic entrance to Monticello and as an educational and recreational resource for visitors and local residents. The linear park is free

and open daily from sunrise to sunset.

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