



The Viking Trail

Year One

Red Trail from Voorhees Middle School
to the Stafford Trail

Introduction

- The VMS Trailblazers Club has been working on building a hiking trail to connect Voorhees Middle School to the Stafford Trail and Eastern High School.
- This is a report on their progress

The Beginning

- In April 2015 the Trailblazers Club was founded for the purpose of building hiking trails in Voorhees Township.
- In May 2015 the Club met with the Voorhees Township Committee and obtained permission to construct a trail connecting VMS to the Stafford Trail.
- Construction started immediately.

Public Interest

- The Club's meeting with the Township Committee was the subject of articles in both the Courier Post and the Voorhees Sun.
- The Viking Trail was also mentioned in the South Jersey Trails website.

New Voorhees club set to blaze new trails

Matt Flowers, @CP_MFlowers 4:06 p.m. EDT June 18, 2015



(Photo: Matt Flowers/Courier-Post)

VOORHEES – Voorhees Middle School social studies teacher David Thompson was tired of hiking through neighboring trails in Cherry Hill and Gibbsboro — so he decided to blaze his own.

With help from 20 of his own seventh-grade students who shared the same dream of creating new hiking, biking and walking trails in Voorhees, Thompson started the Voorhees Middle School Trailblazers Club.

Forming the club was easy, but stepping before the Voorhees Township Committee and the public to make a case for action to begin their first mission, was a different story.

On May 26, Thompson and a group of students persuaded the Voorhees Township Committee meeting to let them build a trail connecting Voorhees Middle School to Eastern High School through the Stafford Woods property.

Thompson says the club is exuberant and ready to do the work for free, two advantages in getting the township on their side.

"We would like to clean up the path, add some signs and maybe a foot bridge," Thompson. He added that the quarter-mile trail could also be used as an additional evacuation route in an emergency.



"It's a chance for the kids to do something that will benefit their township and change their world a little bit, and it's something hopefully they'll be able to look back on in years and say that's something I did to make my town a little better," Thompson said.

Fellow blazers, Alexis Sanchez and Abby Moffett made their case for the new trail in front of the committee. The two friends joined the club together because they believe it would help make Voorhees a friendlier place.

"I want to create lasting memories through this project," Alexis said.

"Not only does this trail and future trails we create add several transportation options, it could also create daily recreation activities for active people," said Abby.

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The Voorhees Middle School Trailblazers Club plans to build a footbridge so walkers can cross this small creek when they create their new trail. (Photo: Matt Flowers/Courier-Post)



JUN 5, 2015 2:52 PM

New Trailblazers club at Voorhees Middle School seeks to expand hiking trails through township

BY ZANE CLARK


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Members of the new Voorhees Middle School Trailblazers Club with the Voorhees Township Committee

Voorhees Middle School's new Trailblazers Club is literally looking to do just that – blaze new hiking and walking trails through Voorhees Township.

Social studies teacher David Thompson and a group of students started the club only a month ago, and already the club has made significant

strides toward its goal.

On May 26, members of the club attended the Voorhees Township Committee meeting to outline the group's aspirations and get the committee's blessing on its activities, and the Trailblazers had a meeting scheduled with the township engineer to learn about permit requirements and other parameters the group would have to work within.

According to Thompson, the group's first goal is to build about a quarter-mile trail from behind Voorhees Middle School to connect to another already established trail in the open public space known as the Stafford Tract, which connects Eastern High School to Evesham Road.

Thompson describes the trail the club hopes to create as one already having been somewhat established as a deer path, so the project would be within the students' limitations and wouldn't require the use of heavy machinery such as front loaders and bulldozers.

"It's a chance for the kids to do something that will benefit their township and



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South Jersey Trails

JANUARY 23, 2016 · 2:50 PM

Viking Trail – Voorhees, NJ



Viking Trail – Voorhees, Camden County, NJ

Distance – 0.33 miles (one way). About 0.8 of a mile total round trip with the walk out on the adjoining Stafford Trail.

Type – Out-and-back

Difficulty: 4 of 10

Total score: 3 of 10

Open – Sunrise to Sunset.

Terrain – Forest

Trailheads – Behind the middle school – 39°51'38.38"N, 74°57'54.42"W

Off Stafford Trail (very approximate) – 39°51'36.80"N, 74°58'5.94"W

Directions – Must pull into the Stafford Trail/Stafford Frisbee Golf parking lot off of Evesham Road between Springdale Road and Holly Oak Drive.

Parking – Good size lot, but can be muddy.

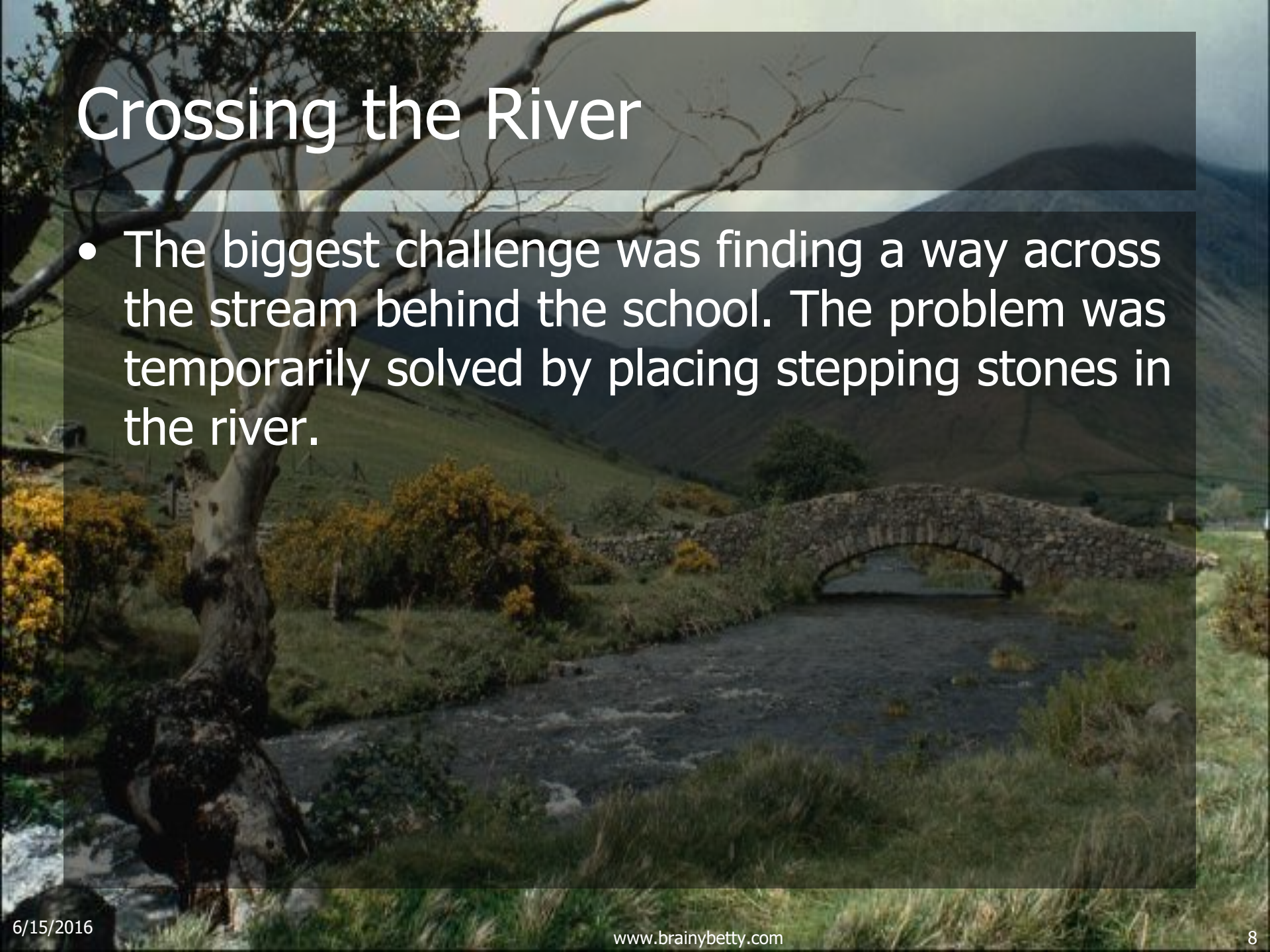
Standouts – Stream crossing!

Markings – Painted blue and white blazes

Description – There is one thing that is amazing about this trail. It's not the length (it's one of the shortest we've reviewed). It's not the scenery (typical South Jersey woods, not that we don't love typical South Jersey woods).

Crossing the River

- The biggest challenge was finding a way across the stream behind the school. The problem was temporarily solved by placing stepping stones in the river.



Stepping Stone Disadvantages

- The stones are submerged through winter, much of spring, and after a heavy rain.
- The stones require a certain degree of agility to cross
- Heavy rains often displace the stones downstream, making the stream impossible to cross
- Water flow often makes the stones slippery and unstable.





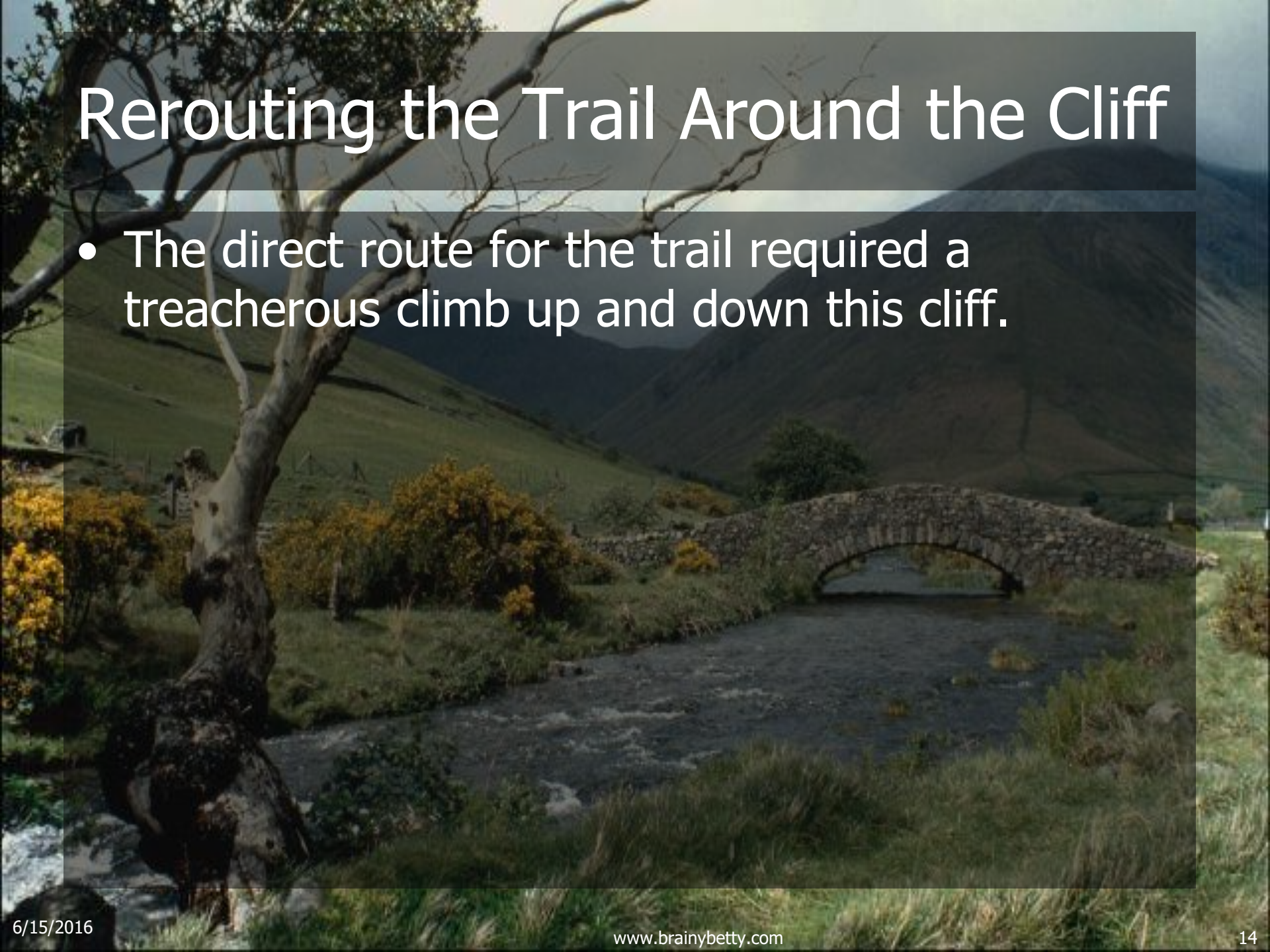
Marking the Trail

- Students obtained can tops from the faculty and the VMS cafeteria
- These were painted red with a blue "V" and nailed to trees to mark the trail.
- Not only did we mark the trail, we were able to recycle cafeteria waste at the same time!
- We also made mile markers by painting discarded concrete blocks we found behind VMS.
- We have also re-marked part of the Stafford Trail with white can tops.



Rerouting the Trail Around the Cliff

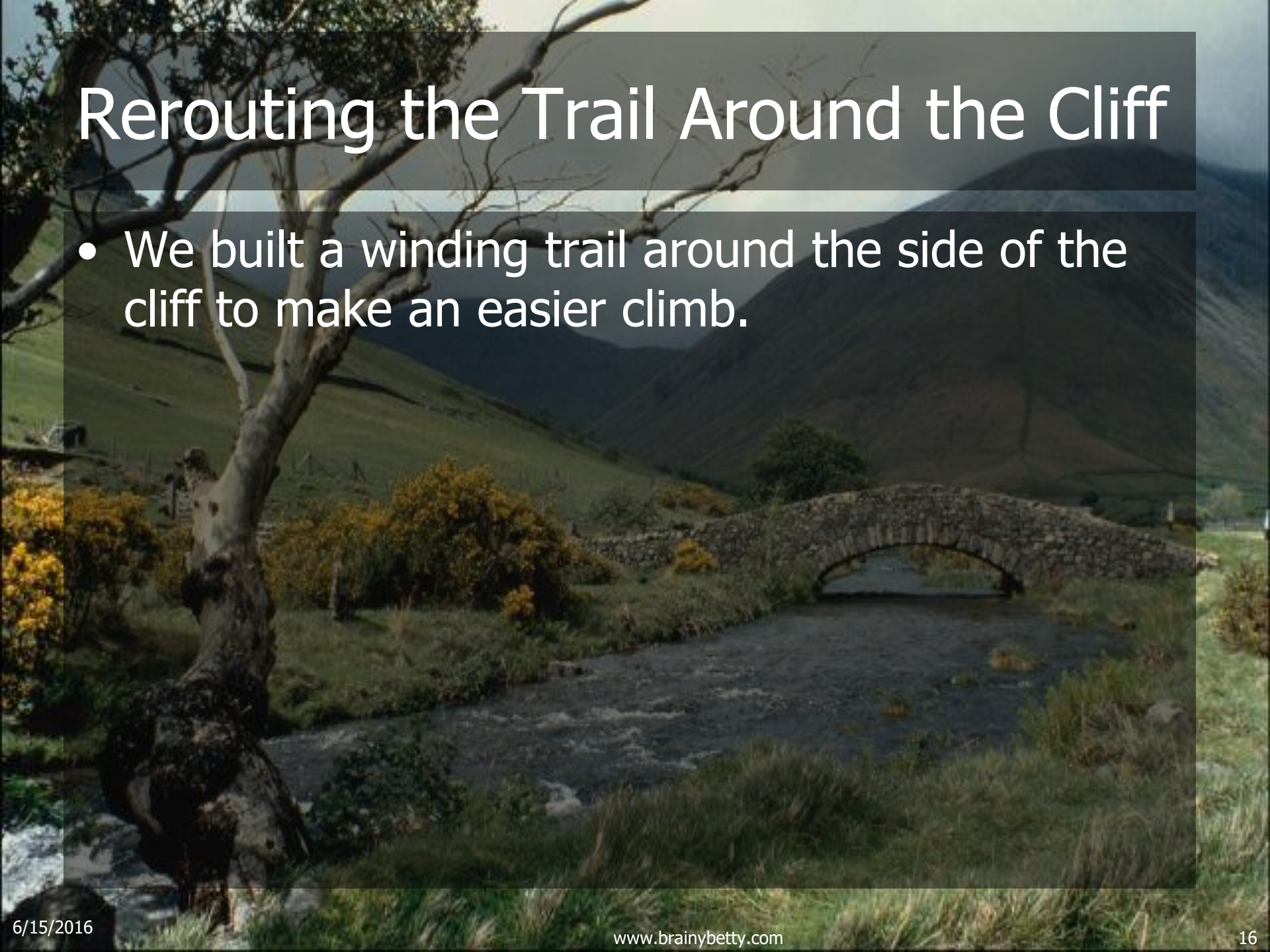
- The direct route for the trail required a treacherous climb up and down this cliff.





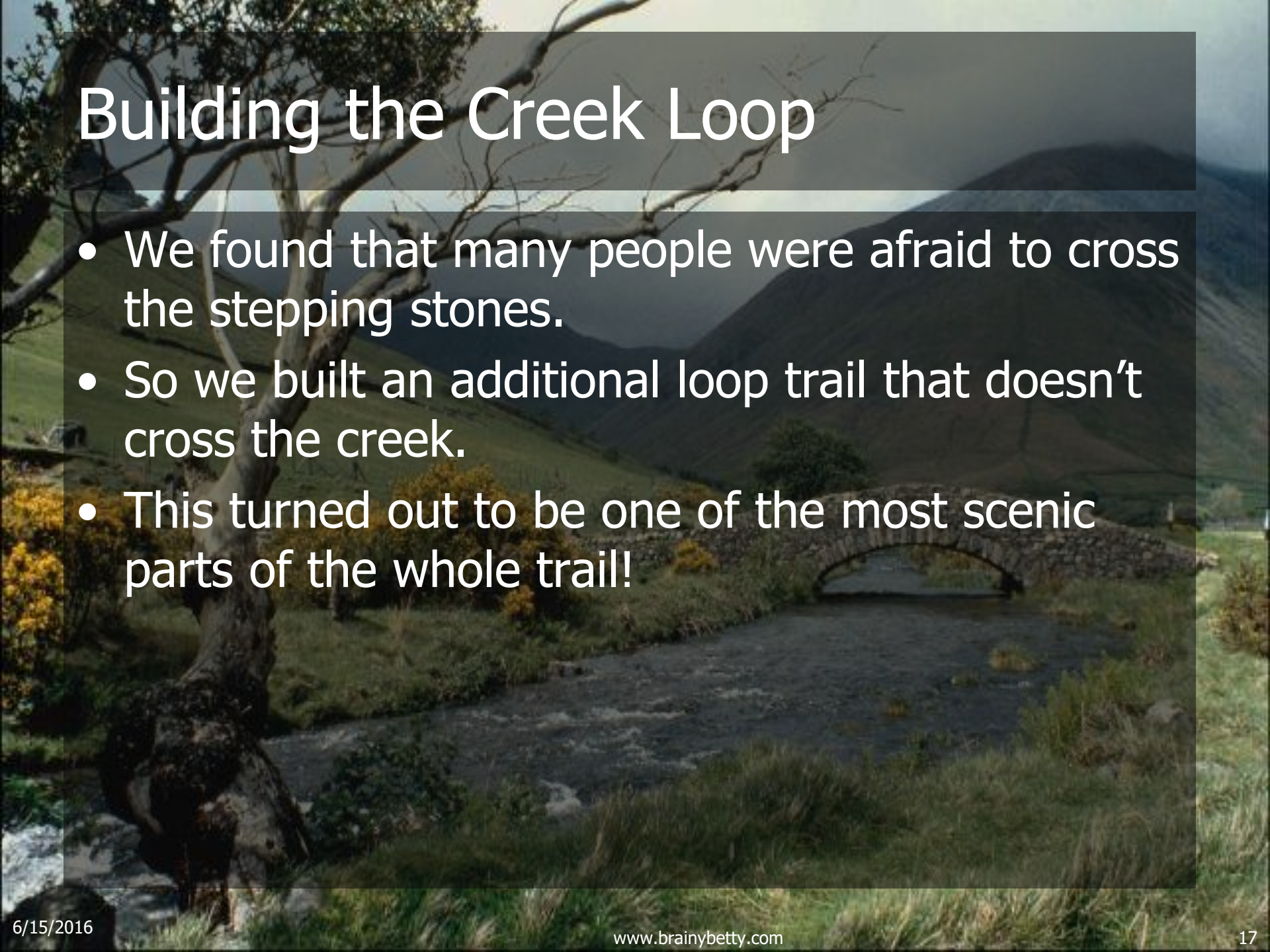
Rerouting the Trail Around the Cliff

- We built a winding trail around the side of the cliff to make an easier climb.



Building the Creek Loop

- We found that many people were afraid to cross the stepping stones.
- So we built an additional loop trail that doesn't cross the creek.
- This turned out to be one of the most scenic parts of the whole trail!





Making Trail Signage

- Some hikers were confused about which way to go once they reached the Stafford Trail. We made and posted trail signs to help.
- We also made trail signs for the Creek Loop and for the trailhead at VMS.



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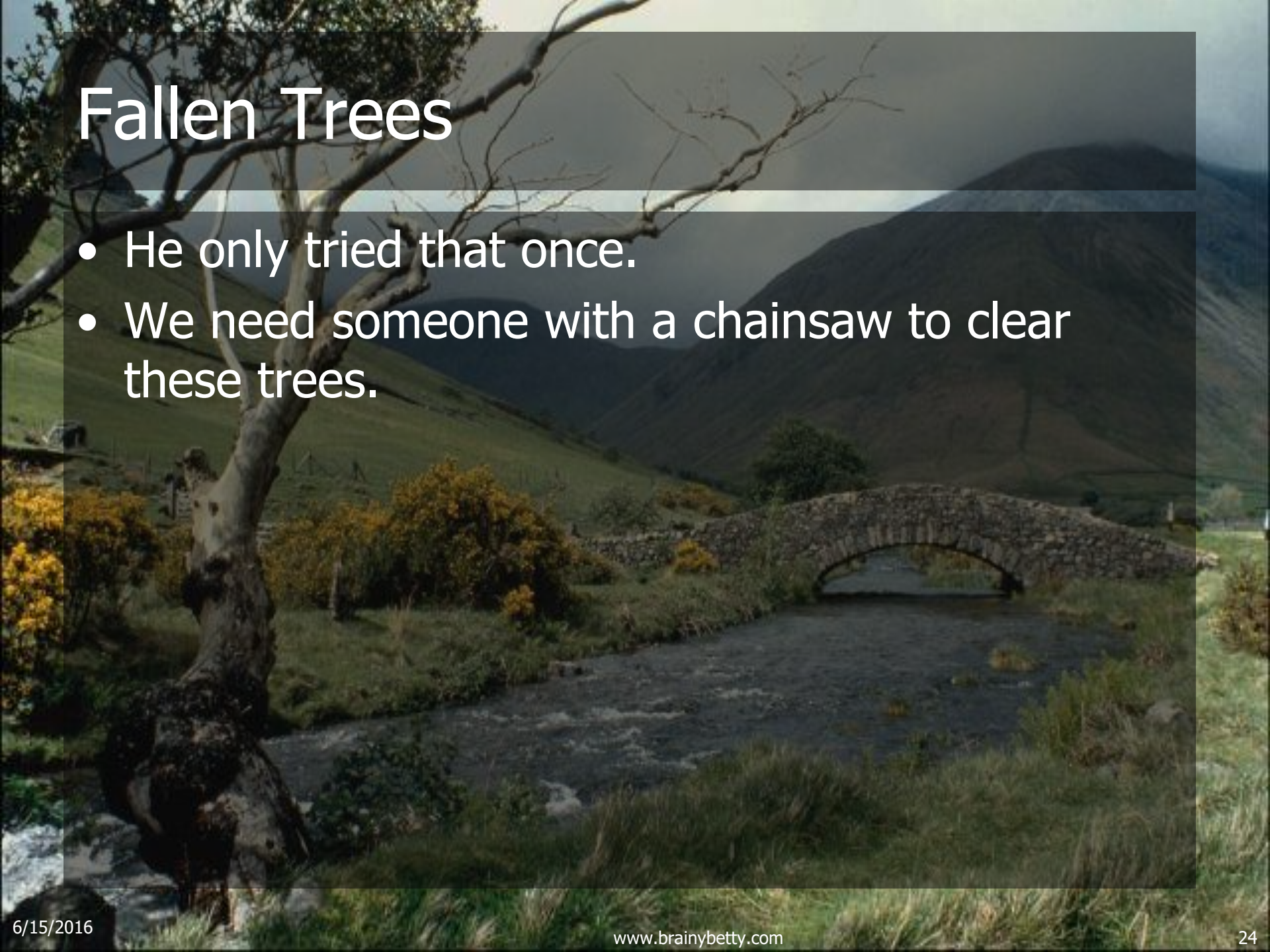
Fallen Trees

- There are about 5 trees that have fallen across the trail
- This is Mr. Thompson's attempt to clear one with an ax.



Fallen Trees

- He only tried that once.
- We need someone with a chainsaw to clear these trees.



Future Plans – Phase II

- We would like to build a connector trail from VMS to Connelly Park.
- This would be on Open Space except for a part that travels across the parking lot of the old West Jersey Hospital.
- We need to obtain permission or an easement from the landowners to do this.
- We will also need signage for where the trail will cross Kresson Road, Oak Hollow and Holly Oak Drives.

Future Plans – Phase III

- We would like to build a second trail from VMS to Eastern High School through the open space behind Hidden Acres and Holly Oak Drives.
- This will make a complete loop of trails between the two schools, so hikers don't hike out and back on the same trail

Future Plans – Phase IV

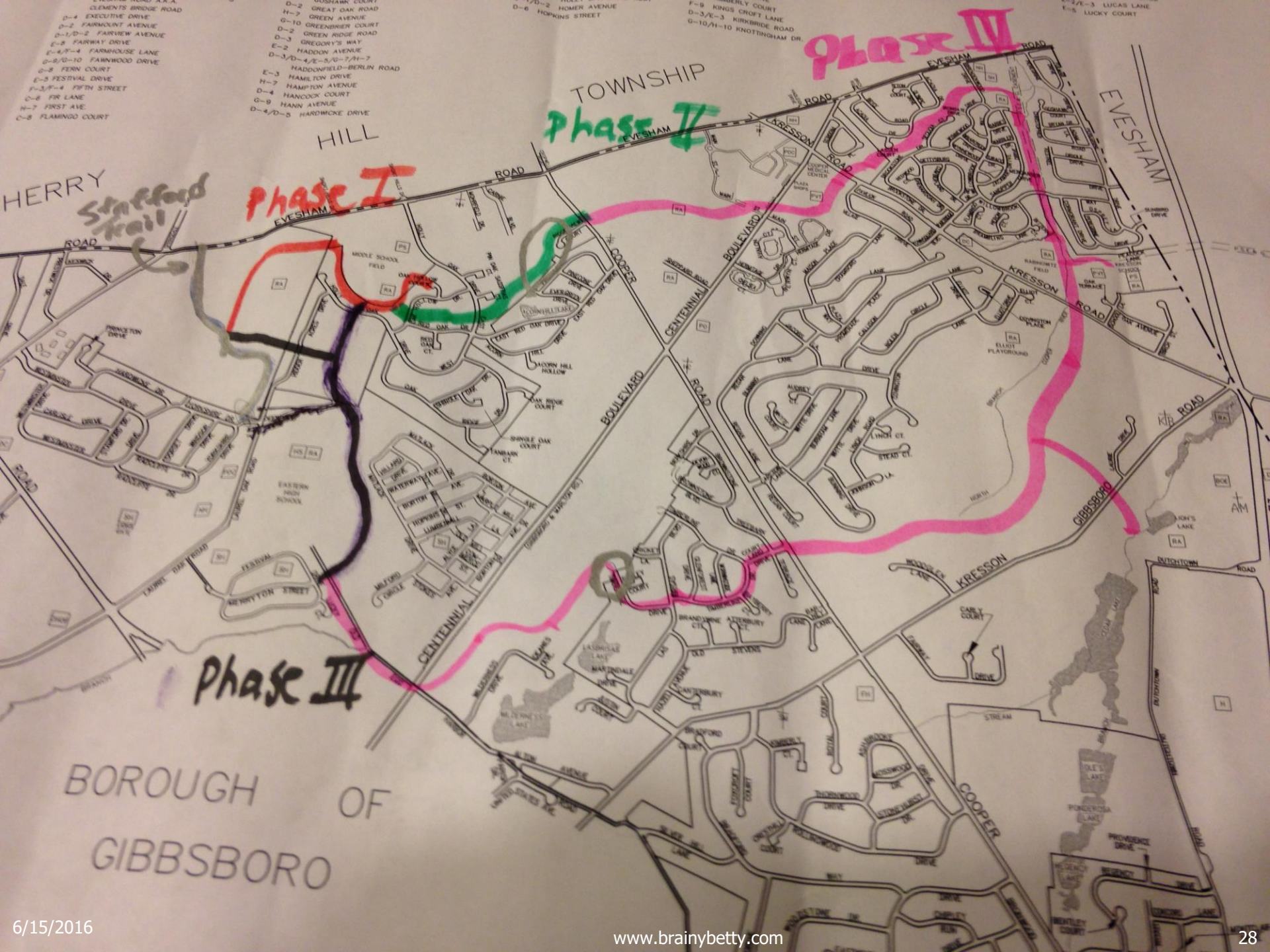
- Eventually we would like to complete a large hiking loop that connects VMS and Eastern High School with:
- The Voorhees Environmental Park
- The North Branch Conservation Area
- Lions' Lake Park
- Kresson Elementary School
- Rabinowitz Field
- Connelly Park
- Hamilton Elementary School

CLEMENTS BRIDGE ROAD
 D-4 EXECUTIVE DRIVE
 D-2 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
 D-1/D-2 FAIRVIEW AVENUE
 E-9 FARWAY DRIVE
 E-6/7-4 FARMHOUSE LANE
 D-8/D-10 FARMWOOD DRIVE
 D-8 FERN COURT
 E-5 FESTIVAL DRIVE
 F-3/F-4 FIFTH STREET
 D-8 FIR LANE
 H-7 FIRST AVE
 C-8 FLAMINGO COURT

D-2 GREEN OAK ROAD
 H-7 GREEN AVENUE
 G-10 GREENBRIER COURT
 D-2 GREEN RIDGE ROAD
 GREGORY'S WAY
 D-3 HADDON AVENUE
 D-3/D-4/E-5/G-7/H-7
 HADDONFIELD-BERLIN ROAD
 E-3 HAMILTON DRIVE
 H-7 HAMILTON AVENUE
 D-4 HANCOCK COURT
 G-9 HANN AVENUE
 D-4/D-5 HARDWICKE DRIVE

D-2 HOMER AVENUE
 D-6 HOPKINS STREET
 F-9 KINGS CROFT COURT
 D-3/E-3 KIRKBRIDE ROAD
 G-10/H-10 KNOTTINGHAM DR

E-3 LUCKY COURT



Grand Opening

- We will have a ceremony opening the Viking Trail to public on Wednesday, June 15th at 11:00 am.
- We invite you to our Grand Opening to see what we've accomplished!