

State Trails Advisory Committee Spring 2026 Meeting

April 28, 2026



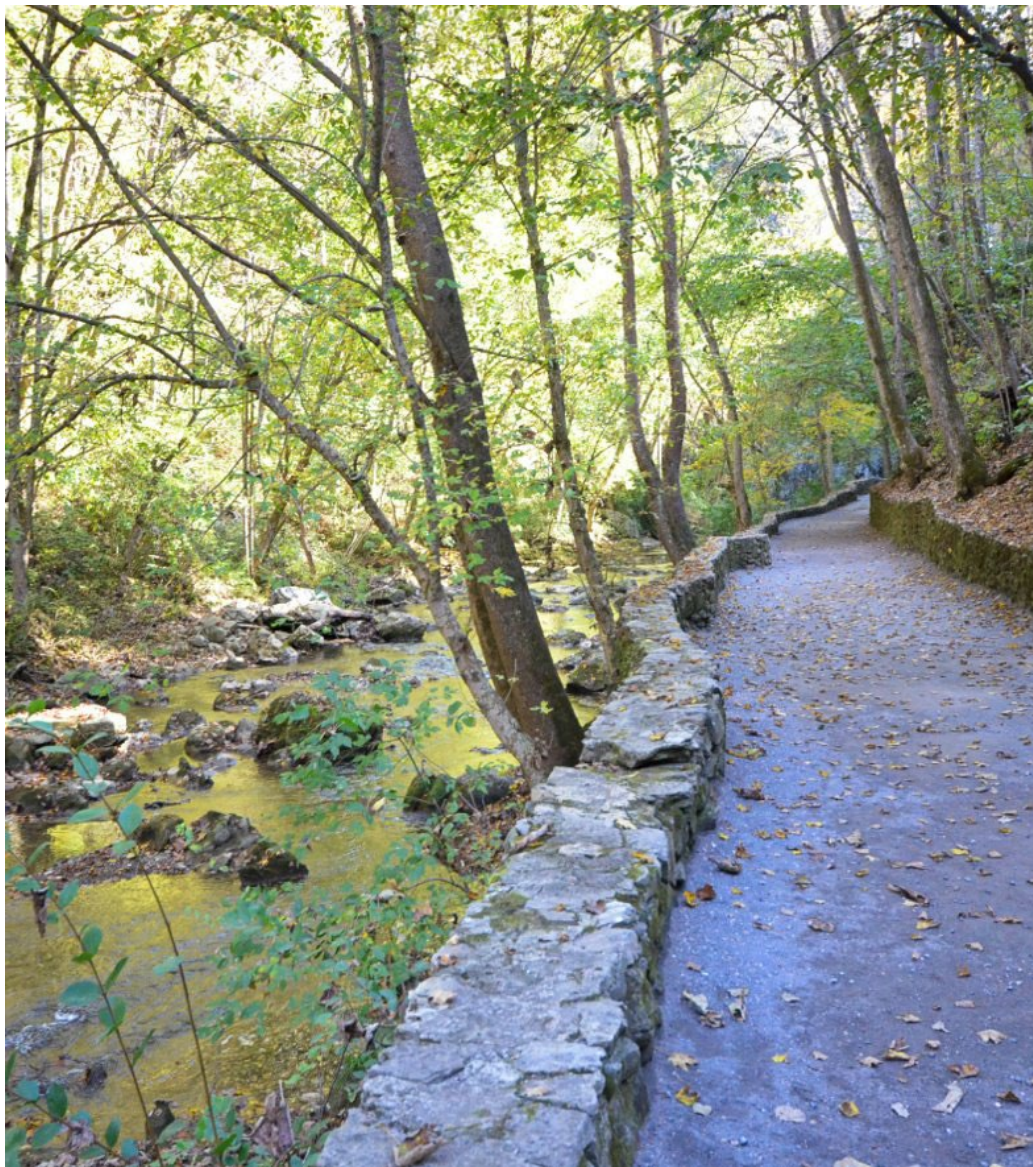
Welcome



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Agenda

- I. Welcome**
- II. Introduction to DCR Director Nicole Rovner**
- III. High Bridge Trail Park Master Plan Update**
- IV. VDOT State Trails Office Update**
- V. Break**
- VI. Natural Heritage Trail Maintenance**
- VII. VOF Update**
- VIII. Navigating House Bill 2088 – Pedestrian Rail Crossings**
- IX. Concluding Remarks and Thanks**



Meeting Purpose

This meeting is currently held annually to present relevant, up to date trail information, and to help in developing and implementing a statewide system of attractive, sustainable, connected, and enduring trails for the perpetual use and enjoyment of citizens.

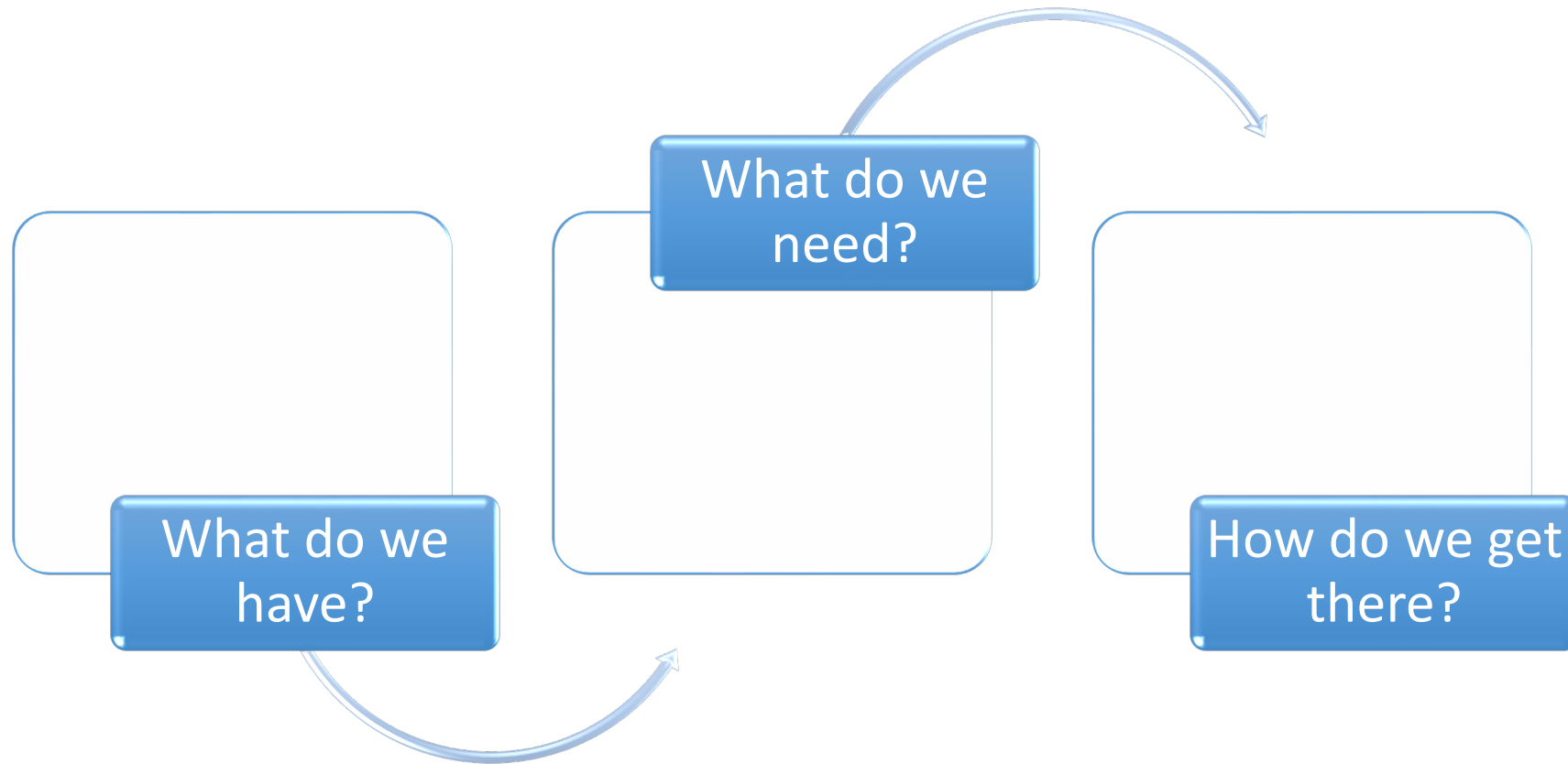
An Update on the High Bridge Trail State Park Master Plan

Guiding the Next 30 Years of Park Development

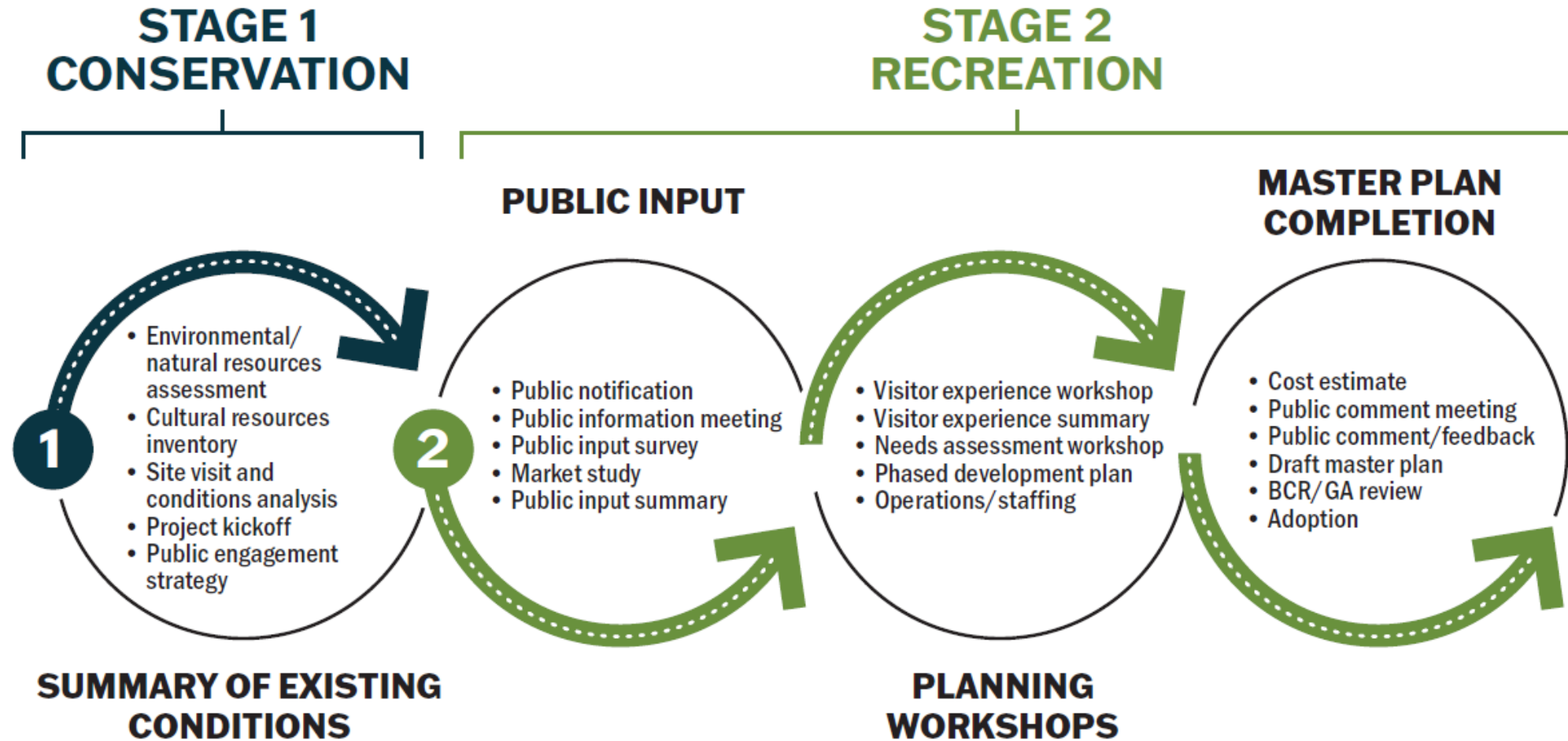
4/28/2026



Master Planning Vision



Master Planning Process



VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

HEART OF APPALACHIA

- BK** - Breaks Interstate Park
- CR** - Clinch River State Park
- NT** - Natural Tunnel State Park
- SW** - Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park
- WR** - Wilderness Road State Park

BLUE RIDGE HIGHLANDS

- CL** - Claytor Lake State Park
- GH** - Grayson Highlands State Park
- HM** - Hungry Mother State Park
- NR** - New River Trail State Park
- ST** - Shot Tower Historical State Park

SOUTHERN VIRGINIA

- FS** - Fairy Stone State Park
- MR** - Mayo River State Park *
- OC** - Oconeechee State Park
- SB** - Staunton River Battlefield Historical State Park
- SR** - Staunton River State Park

VIRGINIA MOUNTAINS

- DO** - Douthat State Park
- HF** - Hayfields State Park *
- SM** - Smith Mountain Lake State Park

SHENANDOAH VALLEY

- NB** - Natural Bridge State Park
- SE** - Seven Bends State Park
- SH** - Shenandoah River State Park
- SK** - Sky Meadows State Park

* Under development

CENTRAL VIRGINIA

- BC** - Bear Creek Lake State Park
- HB** - High Bridge Trail State Park
- HL** - Holliday Lake State Park
- JR** - James River State Park
- PO** - Pocahontas State Park
- PW** - Powhatan State Park
- SC** - Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park
- TL** - Twin Lakes State Park

NORTHERN VIRGINIA

- CB** - Culpeper Battlefields Historical State Park
- LA** - Lake Anna State Park
- LE** - Leesylvania State Park
- MN** - Mason Neck State Park
- SN** - Sweet Run State Park
- WW** - Widewater State Park

CHESAPEAKE BAY

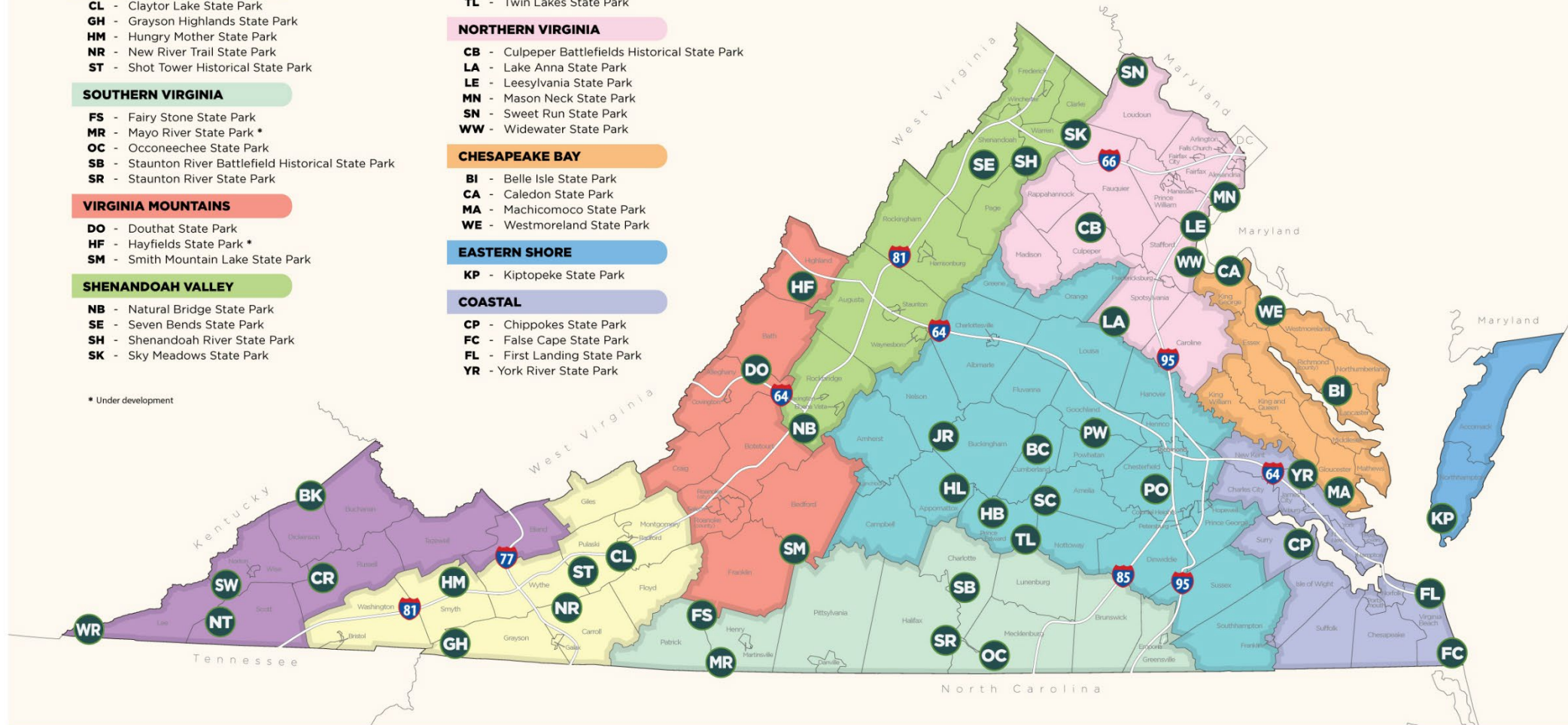
- BI** - Belle Isle State Park
- CA** - Caledon State Park
- MA** - Machicomoco State Park
- WE** - Westmoreland State Park

EASTERN SHORE

- KP** - Kiptopeke State Park

COASTAL

- CP** - Chippokes State Park
- FC** - False Cape State Park
- FL** - First Landing State Park
- YR** - York River State Park



Park Background



- Created by abandonment a 30.9-mile segment of the South Side Railroad by Norfolk Southern Corporation in 2004.
- Donation to DCR was completed in 2007, construction of the trail began in 2008, and the park officially opened in 2010 (except the namesake High Bridge itself).
- Rehabilitation work on the High Bridge began in 2011, and opened to the public in 2012.
- To date, approximately 32.2 miles have been acquired and the trail is open to the public from Pamplin City to approximately one mile west of Burkeville.
- Three major tracts in addition to the trail make up a total of ~1291 acres:
 - Rochelle, Camp Paradise, Piney Grove

Existing Park Resources

Resources Lead the Way

The Virginia State Parks mission is to conserve the **natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources** of the Commonwealth of Virginia and to provide recreational and educational opportunities consistent with good stewardship of these lands, water and facilities that leaves them unimpaired for future generations.



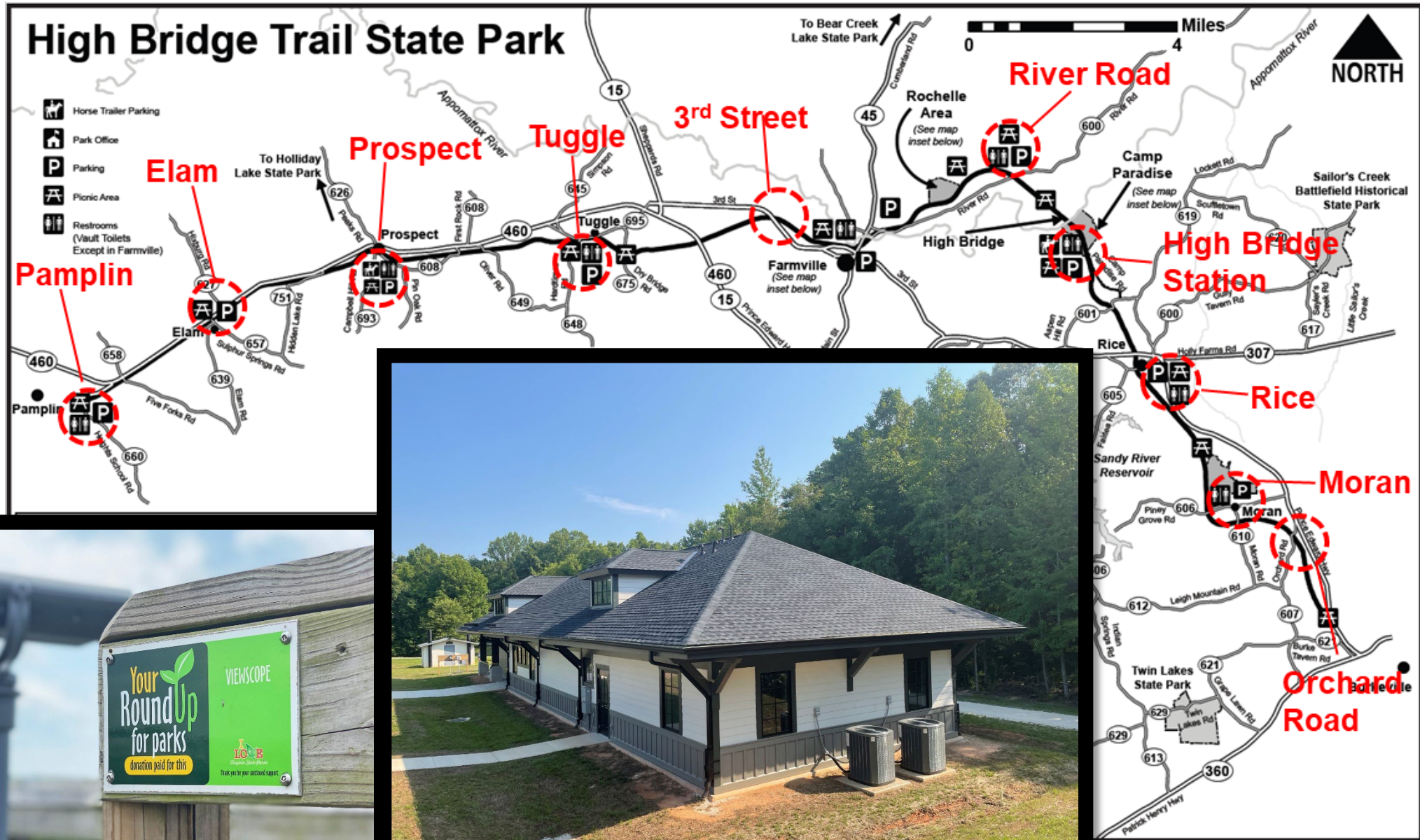
Resources Review

What Makes The Park Special

- Physical Resources
 - *The Park at Present*
- Cultural Resources
 - *Perspectives of the Park from the Human Past*
- Natural Resources
 - *The Park's Natural State*



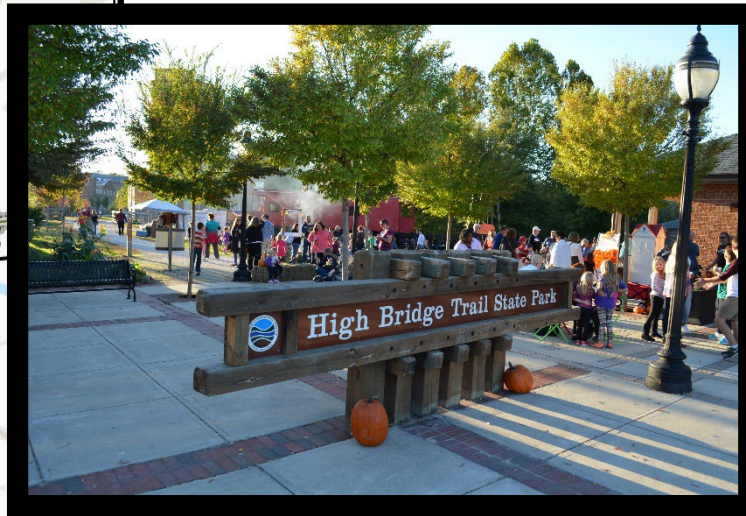
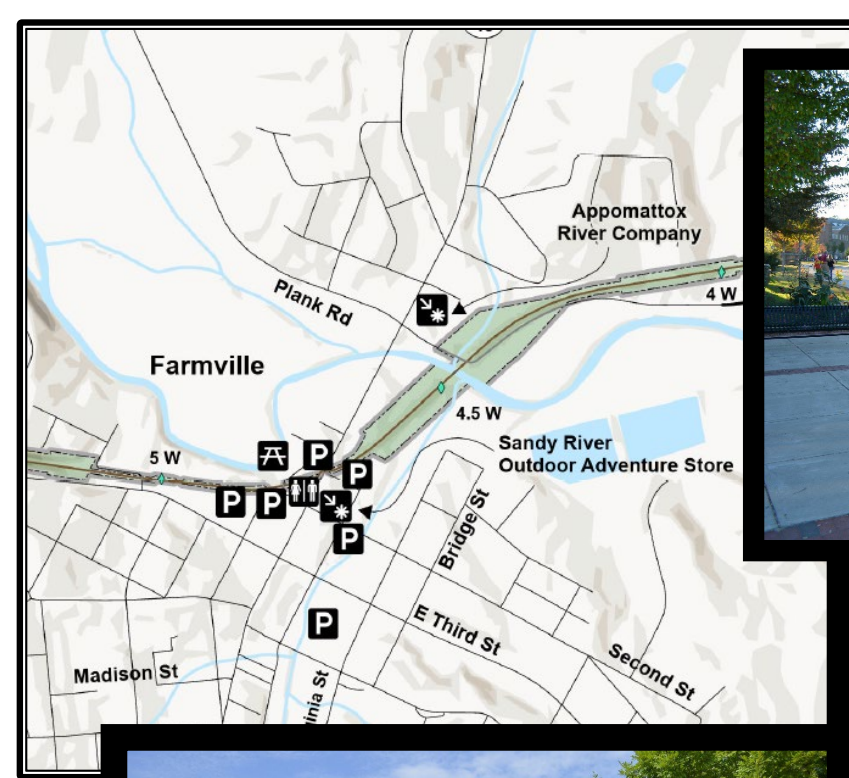
Existing Facilities



Town of Farmville

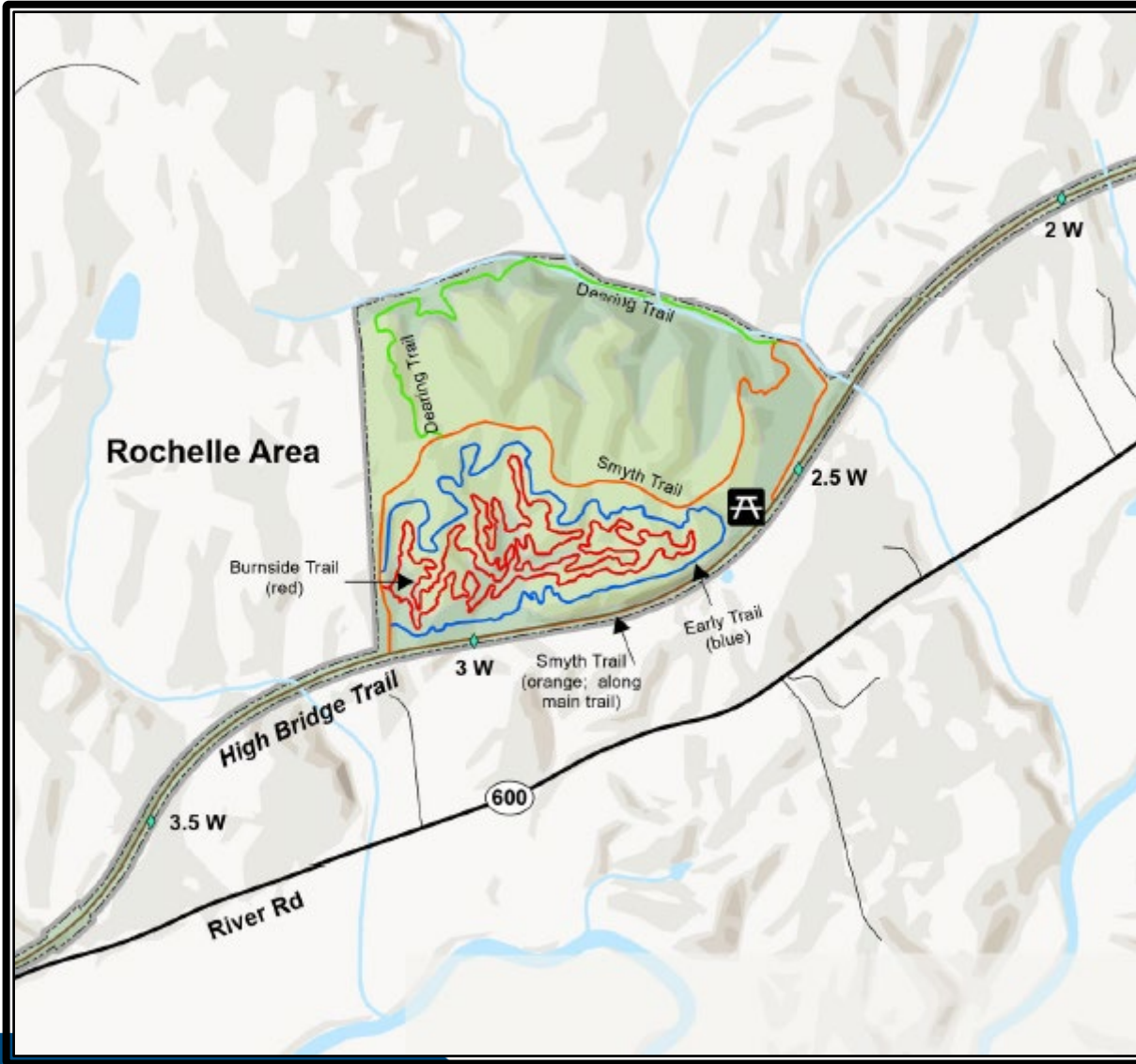
North Main Street Trailhead

- Located in the heart of Historic Downtown Farmville between Mile 4.5W and 5W
- Municipal (public) parking
- Public restrooms
- Bench seating, bicycle racks, informational signs
- Bicycle rentals nearby



Rochelle Area

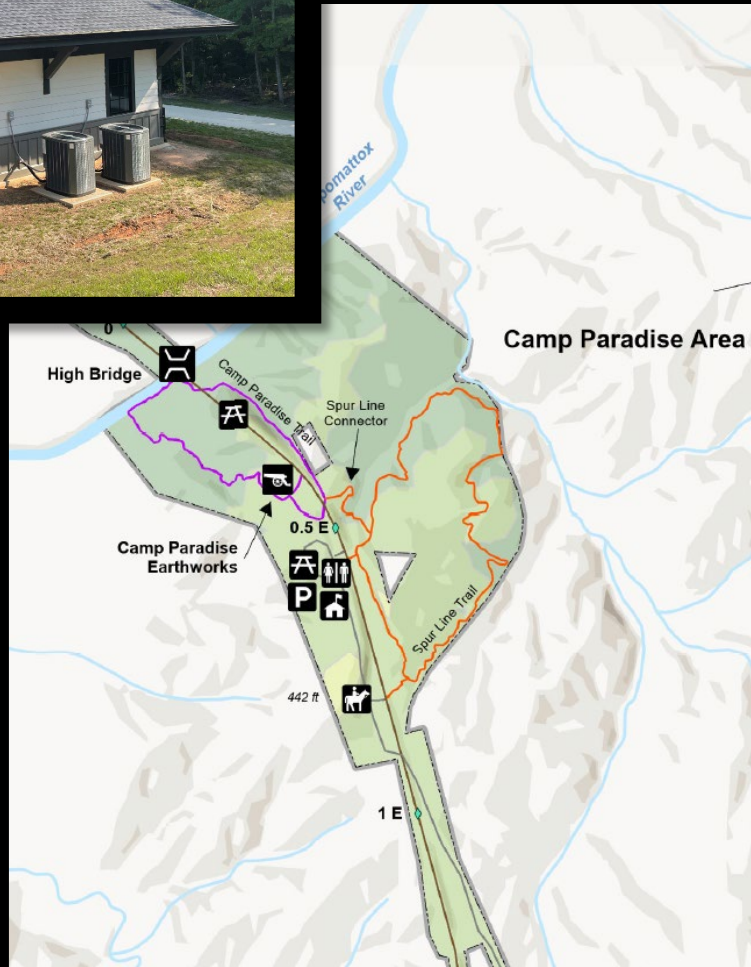
- Located east of Farmville near Mile 3W adjacent to the High Bridge Trail
- Approximately 143 acres
- Includes side trails for hiking, bicycling, and mountain biking
- Picnic area
- Not directly accessible from River Road



High Bridge Station

Trail Center

- Located near Mile 0.5 E at park access point receiving the most visitation
- Recently completed, thoughtfully-designed building to welcome guests to the park and provide visitor information – with newly designed exhibits later in 2026!
- Includes restrooms and small gift shop
- Includes office space for park staff
- Will include exhibits



High Bridge Station

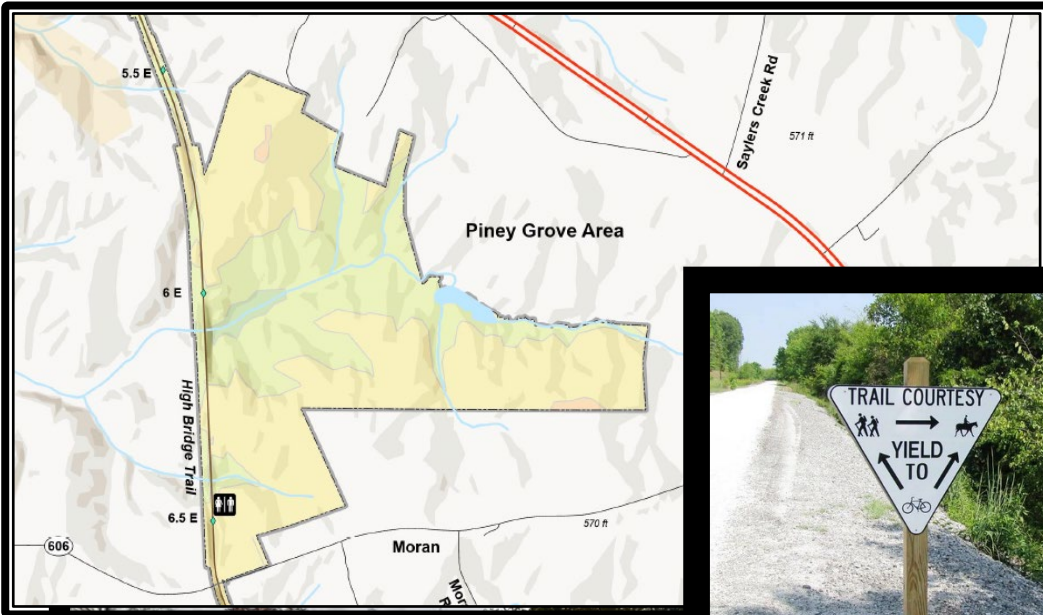
Additional Facilities

- Parking area
- Picnic area with benches/grills
- Nature play area
- Side trails to historic Camp Paradise earthworks and bridge substructure
- Closest access to bridge, fortifications, and observation area (0.3 mi)



Piney Grove Area

- Located on Piney Grove Road west of the Moran Road Access near Mile 6.5 E
- Approximately 286 acres, mostly forest
- Bisected east-west by Marrowbone Creek
- Features vault restrooms on the trail and farmhouse on the interior but is otherwise undeveloped



Summary of Existing Park Amenities

- **High Bridge Station**
 - Visitor Center w/ Comfort Station, Picnic Area, Playground, High Bridge
 - Side Trails to Substructure, Civil War Earthworks, and Appomattox River
- **Trailhead Parking Areas**
 - Pamplin, Prospect, Elam, Tuggle, Farmville, River Rd., Rice, & Moran
- **Rochelle Area**
 - Mountain Biking and Hiking Trails
- **Bridges and Culverts**
 - 3 Additional Bridges: Buffalo Cr., Mill St., & River Rd.
 - 94 Culverts, including Historic Stone Culverts
- **Staff and Service Areas**
 - Ranger Residences on Piney Grove Rd., Green Bay Rd., & Campbell Hill Rd. (Prospect)
 - Green Bay Rd. Maintenance Facility

Cultural Resources

- Indigenous History:
 - Most of the area likely occupied by Eastern Siouan-speaking peoples, such as the Sappony and Monacan, pre-“*contact*”.
 - Agricultural society with the three main crops being “*the Three Sisters*” of corn, beans and squash.
 - One Native American archaeological site has been identified at Camp Paradise; three other known sites are *near* park.



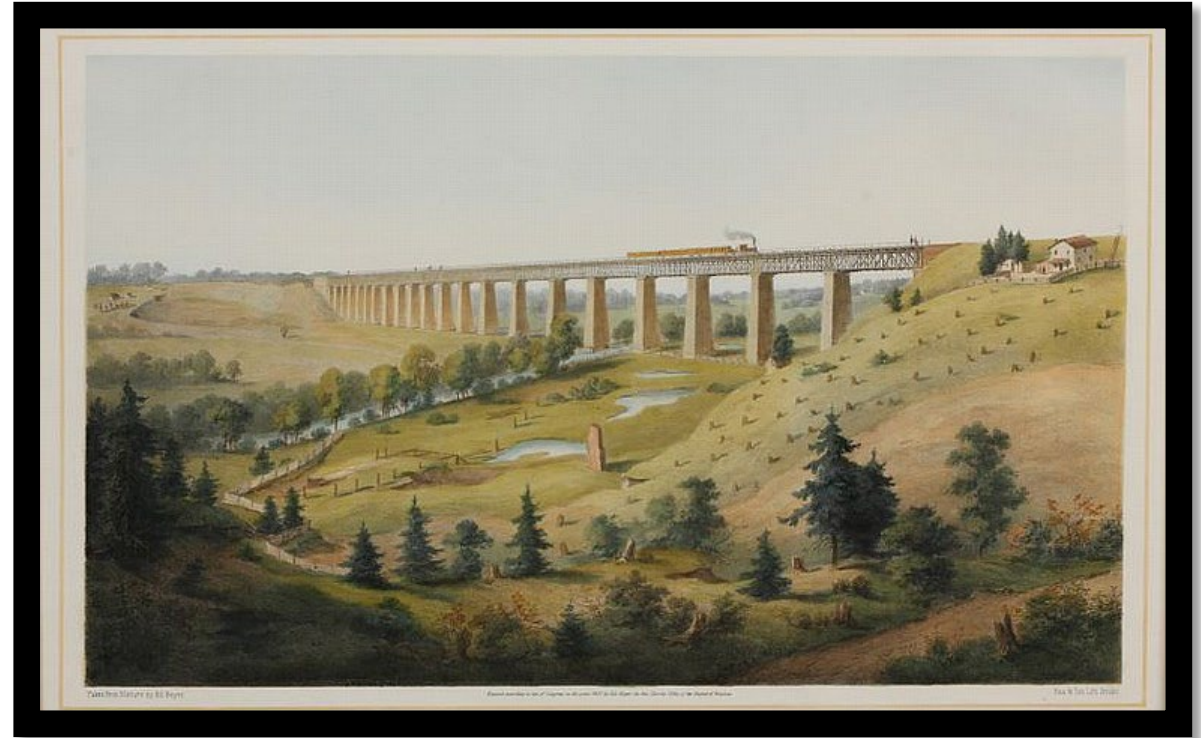
Cultural Resources

- Transportation History:
 - In the early 18th century, settlers began to move west of the fall line into the Piedmont rapidly for agricultural production.
 - Canal system initially pushed by George Washington to facilitate transportation of goods.
 - Upper Appomattox Canal built by 1816, rebuilt as a lock-and-dam system for poled bateaux in the 1830s, and used until 1890s; crossed under the now-High Bridge.



Cultural Resources

- Transportation History:
 - South Side Rail Road Company chartered in 1846; construction began in 1849.
 - Opened for operation from Petersburg to Burkeville in 1852, and to Lynchburg in 1854.
 - Construction of the original High Bridge across the Appomattox River on twenty piers began in August 1851.
 - A combination of rubble abutments, stone pier bases, brick piers and wood superstructure were built; finished in 1854.



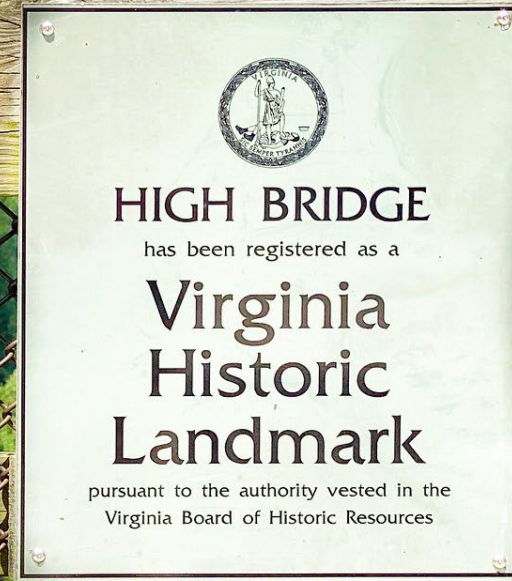
Cultural Resources

- Transportation History:
 - Bridge sustained significant damage in Civil War.
 - Renovations in 1870, 1886 and 1901, but over time the heavy use, age and failure of the pier materials led to the need to replace the bridge.
 - Work began on a new, steel structure in May 1913; complete in June 1914.
 - 1854 High Bridge was demolished; abutments and piers were left standing except one in the Appomattox which was removed to not impede river travel; 13 still stand today.
 - Recycled bricks from western 6 ½ piers used in local construction due to WW2 resource scarcity.



Cultural Resources

- Transportation History:
 - 1914 Bridge was utilized for passenger service by the Norfolk and Western Railway until 1970, and Amtrak until 1979.
 - Freight service continued until 2005, when the Norfolk and Southern Railway decided to abandon the line from Burkeville to Pamplin City, setting in motion the events that led to the State Park.
 - Listed in the National Register of Historic Places and VA Landmarks Register in 2008.



Cultural Resources

- Civil War History:
 - Earthworks constructed by Confederates in 1864 to protect High Bridge from both directions.
 - A temporary camp of log cabins dubbed “Camp Paradise” established a half mile northwest of the bridge itself.
 - Considered very comfortable by the troops, who enjoyed fishing, hunting, music, dances, and productions at the sites.



Cultural Resources

- Civil War History:
 - Key battles at or near current park in 1865 as part of the Appomattox Campaign that brought an end to the Civil War:
 - Sailor's Creek on April 6
 - High Bridge on April 6-7
 - Cumberland Church/Farmville on April 7
 - Appomattox Station on April 8
 - Appomattox Courthouse on April 9
 - Followed by Lee's surrender to Grant on April 9



Natural Resources

- **Native Ecosystem Protection**

- Especially critical in the larger tracts of land along the trail (e.g. Rochelle, Piney Grove).

- **Invasive Species Management**

- Woody species are primary targets, including *Ailanthus*, *Paulownia* and *Eleagnus*.
- Herbaceous species such as *Lespedeza*, *Microstegium* and English Ivy are secondary targets.



Credit: TN-KY Plant Atlas

Sensitive Species

- Key Sensitive Species in or near park:
 - Hoary Skullcap (*Scutellaria incana*) – G5/S2
 - Northern Rattlesnake-master (*Eryngium yuccifolium* var. *yuccifolium*) – G5T5/S2
 - Virginia False Gromwell (*Lithospermum virginianum*) – G4/S2
 - Virginia Quillwort (*Isoetes virginica*) – G1/S1



Credits: TN-KY Plant Atlas and Virginia Plant Atlas

Market Analysis

Market Analysis (2025)

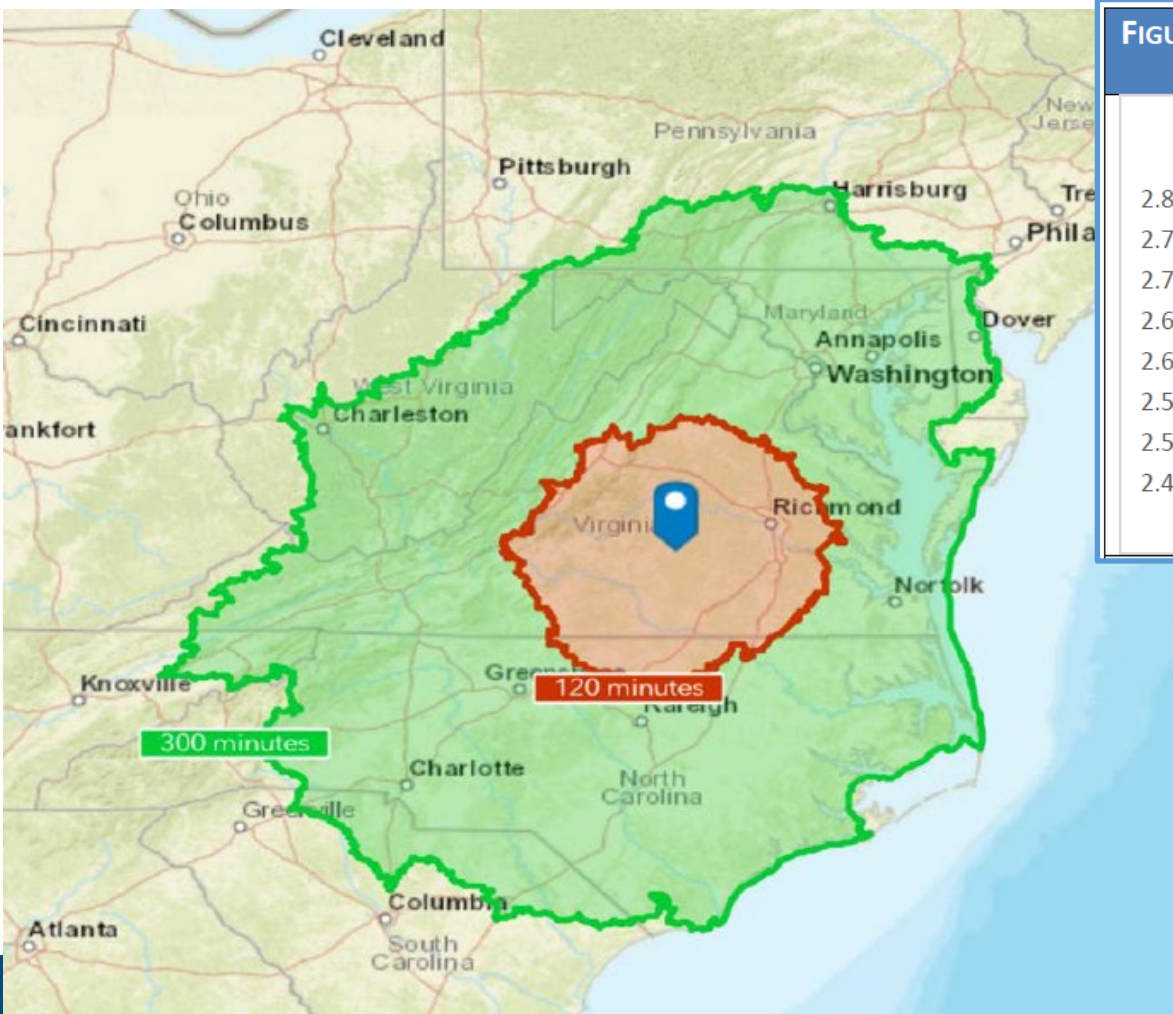


FIGURE 8: POPULATION SIZE TRENDS WITHIN SERVICE AREAS

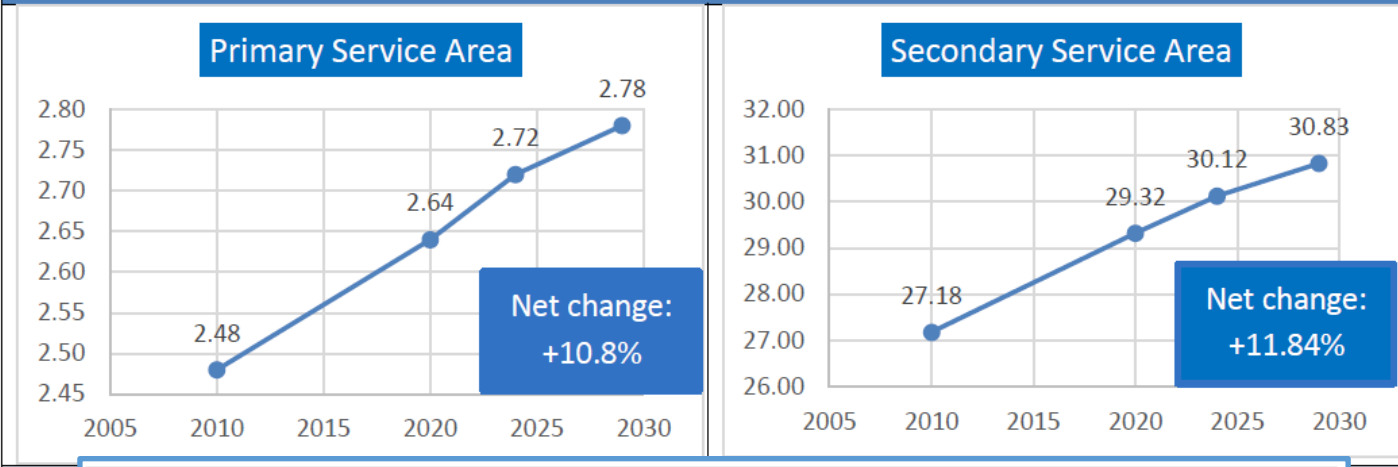
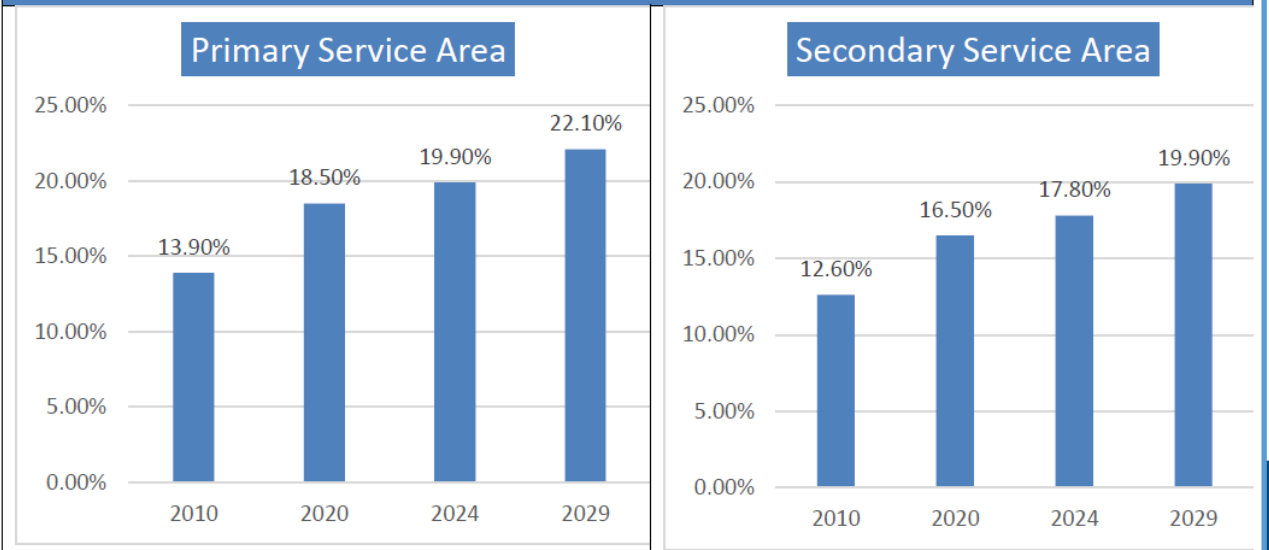


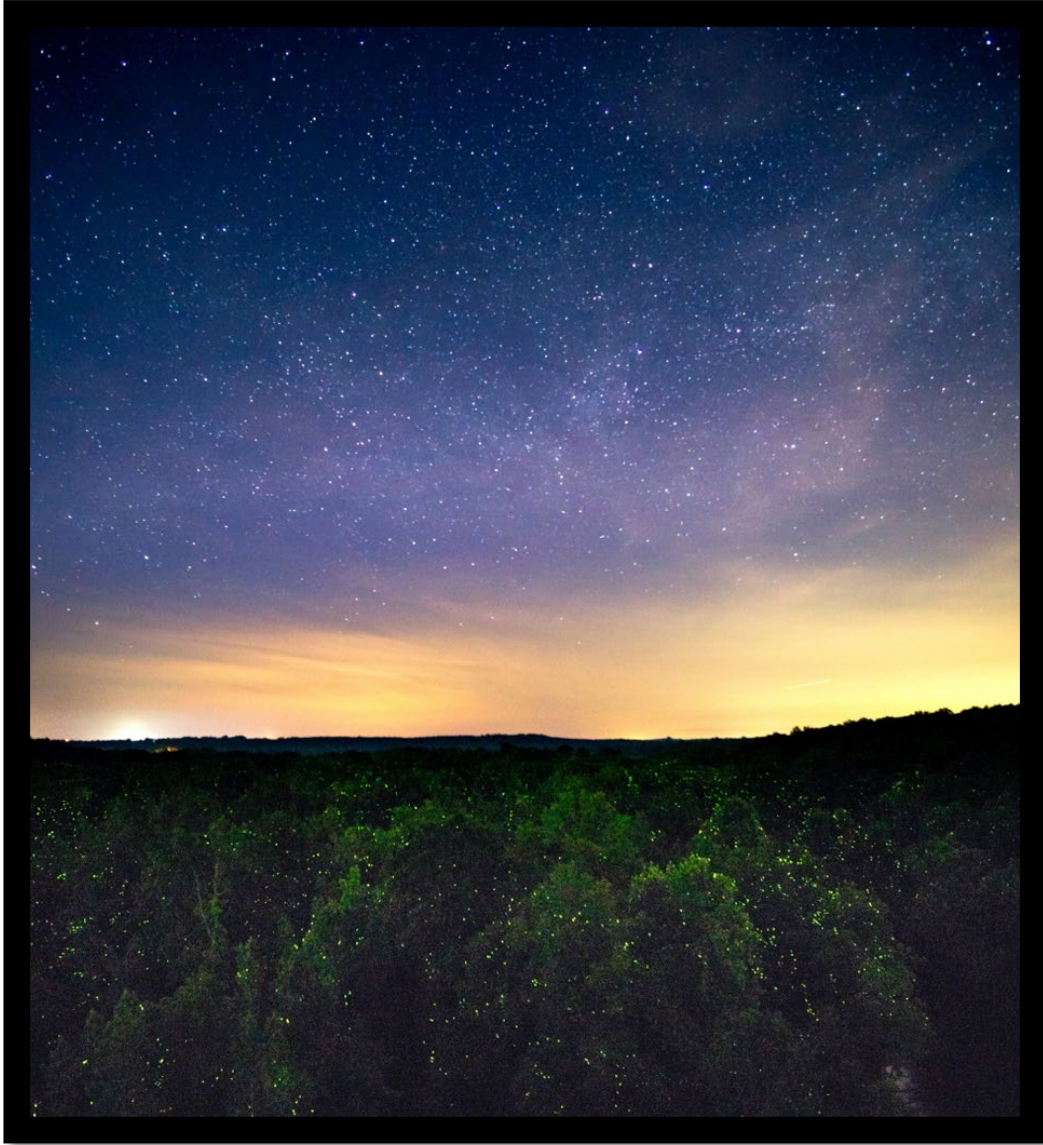
TABLE 2: RELATIVE SIZE OF POPULATION 65+ YEARS OLD WITHIN SERVICE AREAS



Public Input and Feedback

Public Input

- Virginia Outdoors Survey (2022)
- Public Information Meeting (October 2024)
- *Your Comments Count* Survey (2024 – 2025)
- Market Analysis (2025)
- Public Comment Meeting (October 2025)



Your Comments Count Survey (2025)

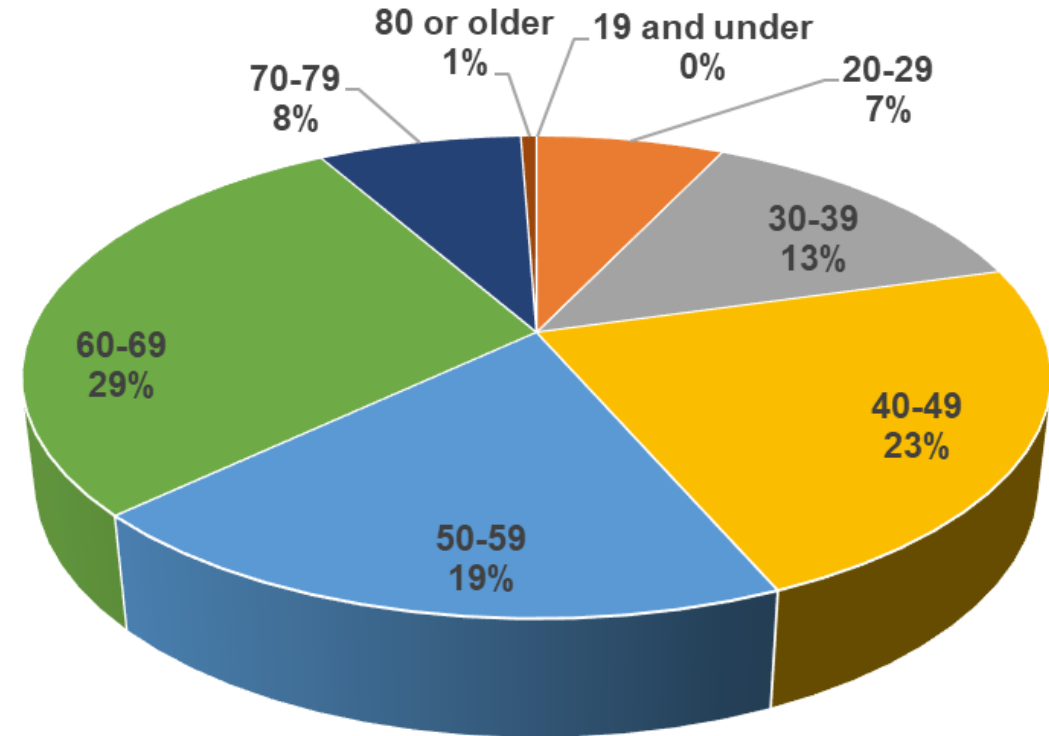
Recreational Activities Conducted

- #1 Hiking (69.7%)
- #2 Bicycling (28.6%)
- #3 Other* (12.6%)
- #4 Educational Programs (9.1%)
- #5 Picnicking (8%)
- * Walking/Running (5.6%), Ranger Talk/Tour (4.6%)

Satisfaction w/ Day-Use Facilities

- #1 Visitor Center (4.83)
- #2 Trails (4.82)
- #3 Restrooms (4.62)
- #4 Picnic Area (4.55)
- #5 Disability Access (4.46)

Age of Respondents (2025)



YCC Survey Input

Distance from park:

- Within 50 miles: 38%
- More than 50 miles: 62%

Best aspect of park visit:

1. High Bridge itself
2. Trails (including side trails)
3. Views and scenery
4. Staff

Top three words/phrases that visitors used to describe what they valued about this park:

1. Trails (value for recreation/exercise)
2. History/Beauty (tie)
3. Views and scenery
4. Access and convenience

One thing to add to this park:

1. Trails (all types)
2. Parking
3. Camping
4. Drinking water/restrooms

Desired Visitor Experience

Visitor Experience

Visitor Experience (VE) is a broad term encompassing the overall journey, activities and interactions of park users, as well as their personal, subjective feelings, impressions and level of satisfaction with the park.

Master Planning looks at VE to understand and/or develop:

- Audiences (i.e. User Groups)
- Interpretive Themes and Subthemes
- Park Purpose Statement
- Essential Experiences
- Experience Areas



Audiences & User Groups

- **Active Recreators**
 - Bikers, Hikers, Racers, Trail Runners
- **Cultural Special Interest Users**
 - Ancestry Seekers, History Buffs
- **Education Users**
 - Homeschool and Public School Groups
- **Low Impact Recreation Users**
 - Casual Trail Users, Dog Walkers, Photographers, Picnickers, Visitors with Accessibility Needs, Walkers
- **Natural Resource Special Interest Users**
 - Birders, Stargazers, Wildlife Watchers
- **Volunteers**

Purpose Statement

Featuring the historic High Bridge as its centerpiece, **High Bridge Trail State Park** provides a premier rail-to-trail experience showcasing the journey of goods, people, and armies through and across the rural communities lying at the Heart of Virginia.



Essential Experiences

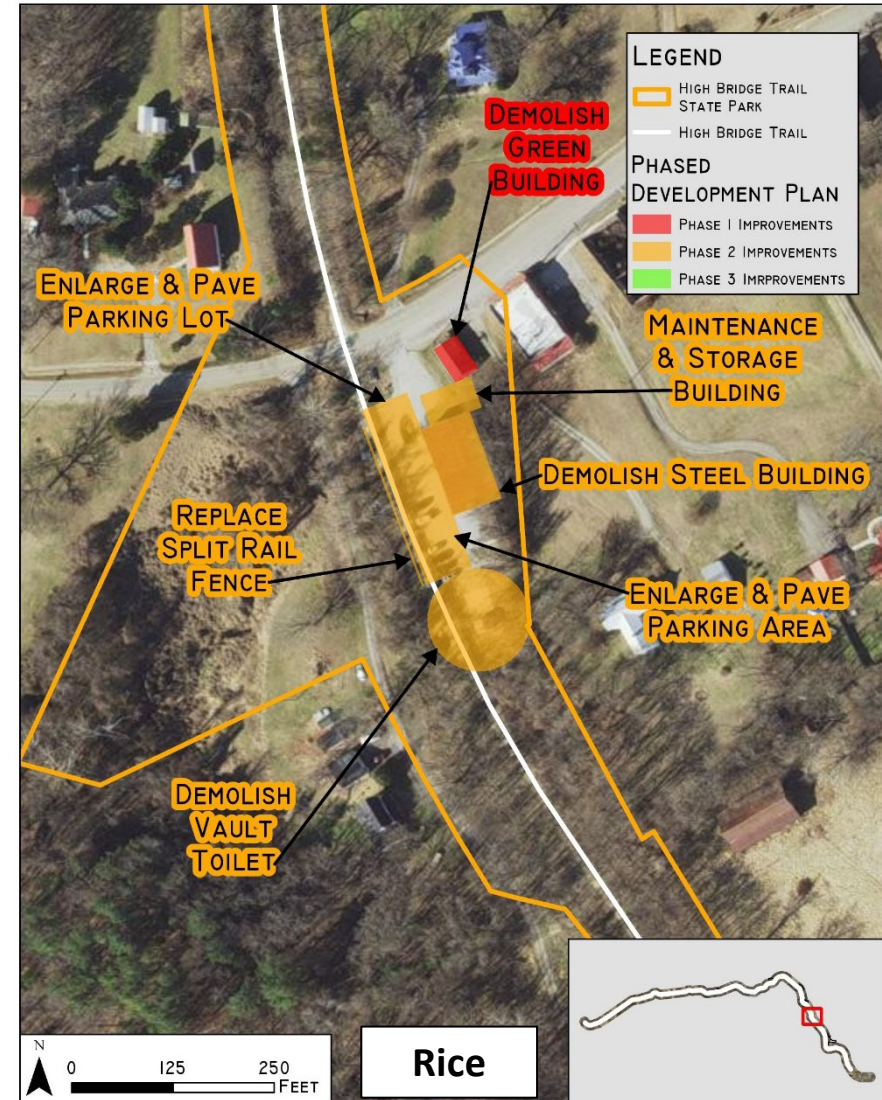
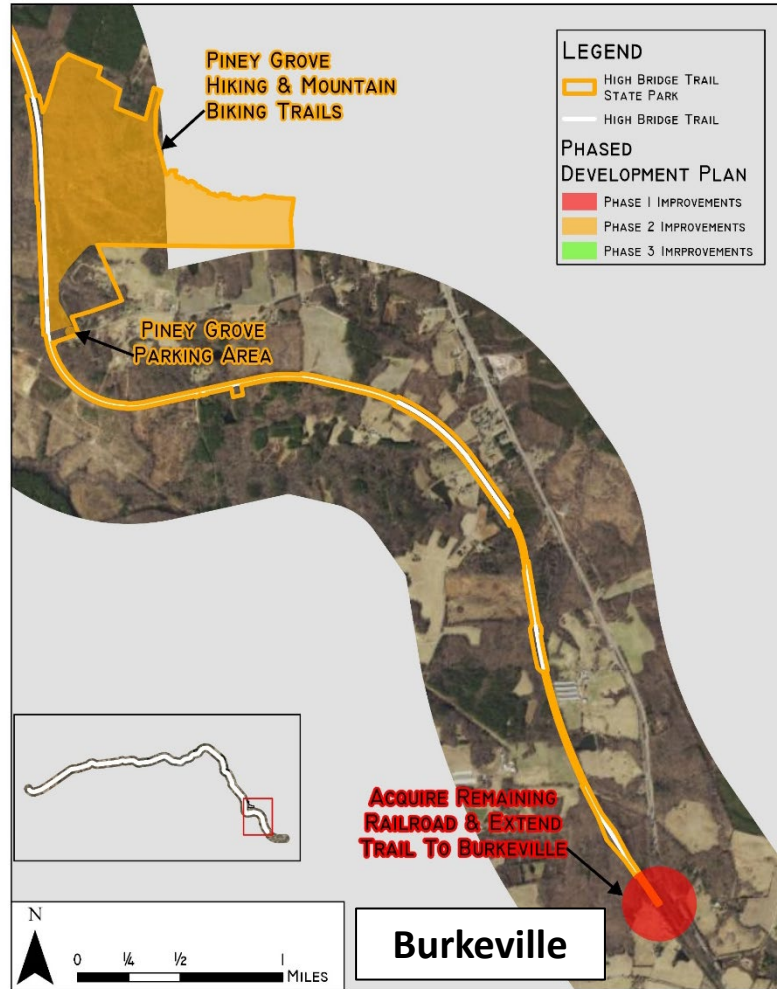
Immersive Opportunities offered by the Park that visitors should enjoy to fully take in its story and resources:

- 1-2 Hours:
 - Experiencing the Bridge and taking in the view above and below
 - Using Farmville as a base to explore the central portion of the park
 - Stand amidst Civil War history at High Bridge Trail
 - Immerse yourself into the exhibits at High Bridge Station
- Half Day:
 - Take a mountain bike ride on the Rochelle Tract
 - Attend a nighttime ranger-led program
- Full or Multiple Days:
 - Enjoy the High Bridge Trail experience from Pamplin to Burkeville

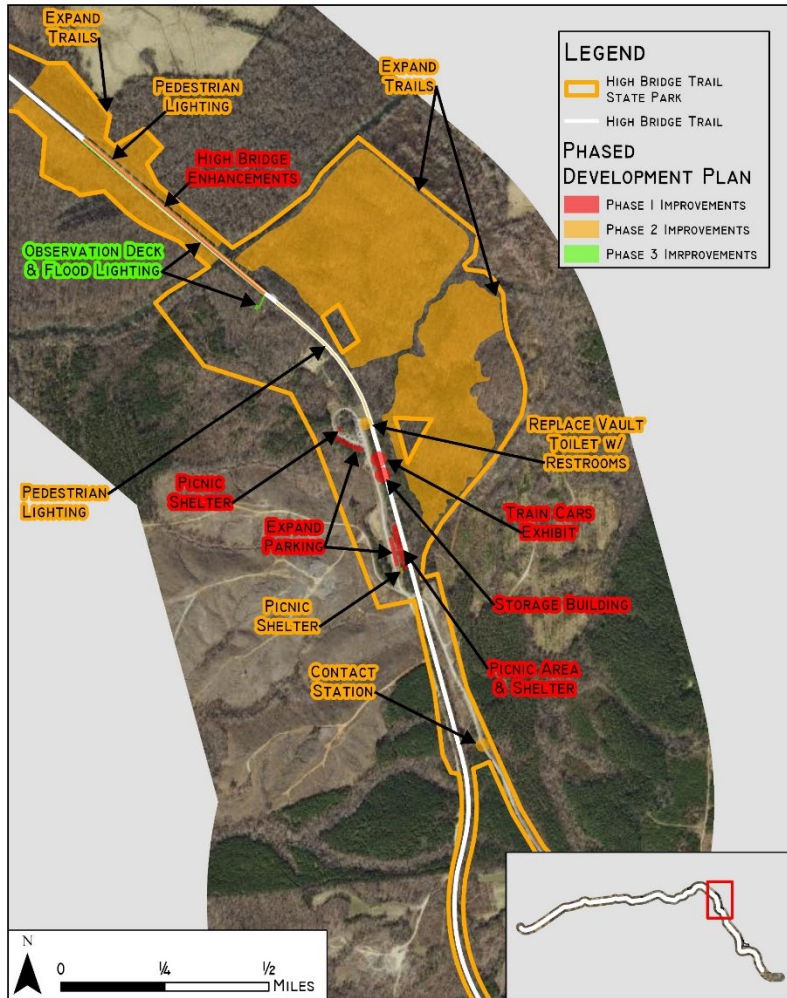


Phased Development Plan and Staffing Plan

Burkeville to Rice



High Bridge Station



Phase 1

- Replace Decking & Railings on HB
- Install Observation Ports in HB Decking & Railings
- Picnic Area, Picnic Shelter, & Paved Parking Expansion
- Picnic Shelter in Exist. Picnic Area
- Train Car Exhibits
- Freight Depot-Themed Storage Building

Phase 2

- Accent Lighting on HB
- Lighting along HBT b/w VC & HB
- Expand Trails at HBS and Add Trails Under Western End of HB
- Picnic Shelter in New Picnic Area
- Replace Vault Toilet w/ Restrooms
- Contact Station

Phase 3

- Observation Deck at Eastern End of HB
- Floodlighting of HB for Night Events

River Road to Farmville

River Road



DEMOLISH VAULT TOILET

ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND

PICNIC SHELTER

RELOCATE RIVER ROAD PARKING AREA

RESTROOMS

PICNIC AREA

Phase 1

- Replace Decking on River Rd., Mill St., & Buffalo Cr. Bridges in Farmville
- Eliminate 3rd St. Parking in Farmville

Phase 2

- Relocate River Rd. Parking & Picnic Area to Opposite Side of Road
- Picnic Shelter at River Rd.
- Replace Vault Toilet w/ Restrooms at River Rd.
- Accessible Playground at River Rd.
- Replace Railings on Buffalo Cr. Bridge
- Eliminate E. Osborn Rd. Parking

Farmville



PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION TO TOWN PARKS/TRAILS

REPLACE WOOD RAILINGS ON BRIDGE WITH DURABLE ALTERNATIVE

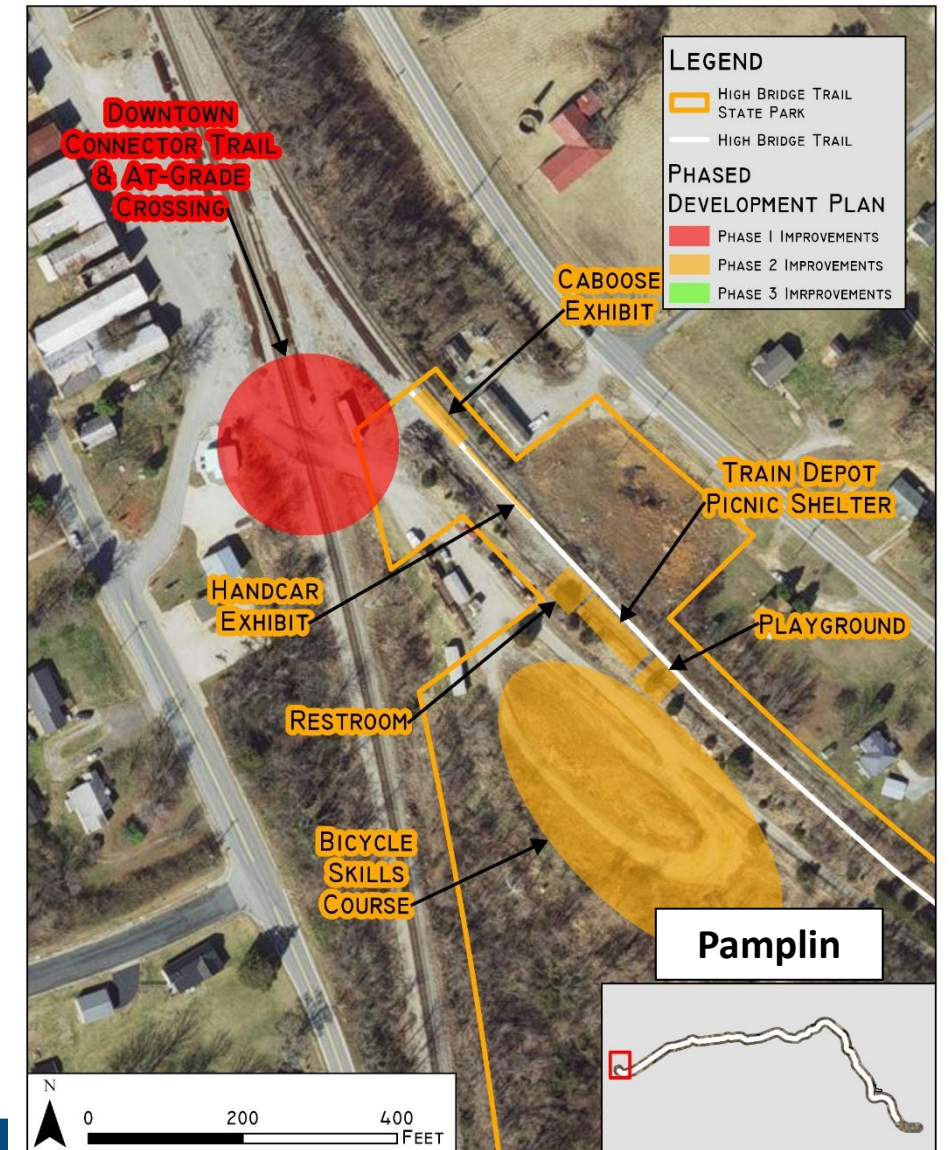
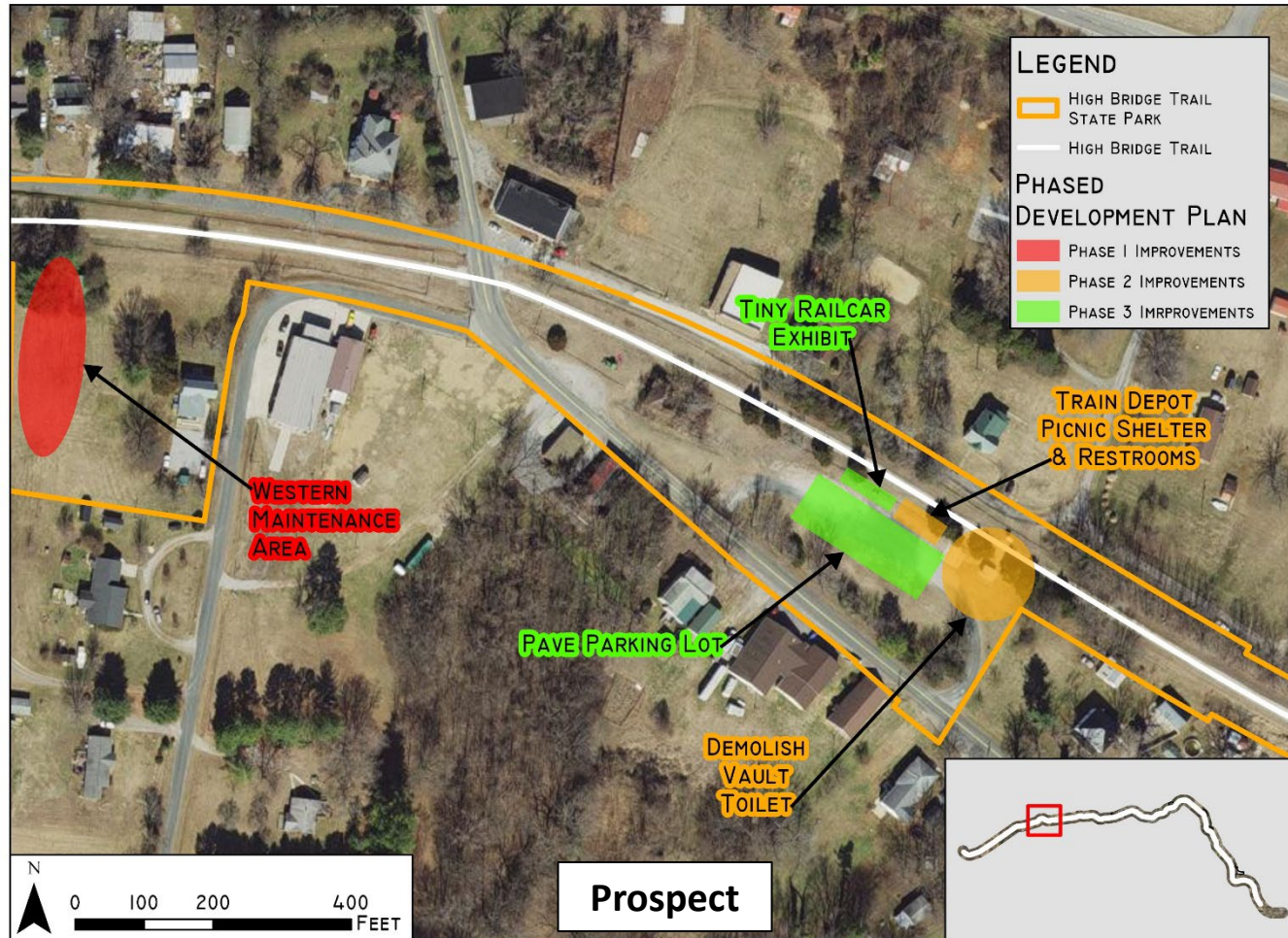
REPLACE WOOD DECKING ON BRIDGE WITH DURABLE ALTERNATIVE

ELIMINATE OSBORN ROAD ACCESS/PARKING

Phase 3

- Connections to Town of Farmville Parks/Trails

Prospect to Pamplin



Phased Development Cost

Over a 30 Year Time Horizon

Phase 1:

- ~\$7.8M

Phase 2:

- ~\$9.2M

Phase 3:

- ~\$540K

Total:

- ~\$17.6M



Staffing Needs

Current Staff

- Park Manager
- Chief Park Ranger – Law Enforcement (x2)
- Office Manager
- Park Ranger – Maintenance

Immediate Needs

- Chief Park Ranger – Visitor Experience
- Park Ranger – Maintenance
- Public Safety & Law Enforcement position

Phase 1

- Assistant Park Manager
- Chief Park Ranger – Operations
- Park Ranger – Resource Management

Phase 2

- Office Assistant
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Park Ranger – Maintenance

Phase 3

- Education Specialist



Timeline

- **Today:** Presentation at STAC.
- **Thursday:** Presentation to the Board of Conservation and Recreation (BCR) for approval.
- Following approval from BCR, Master Plan will be made available to the General Assembly for a 30-day review.
- **June/July 2026:** Final adoption by the DCR Director.
- Expected total buildout is 30 years.

Questions?



Visit us on the web for project updates and presentation materials!

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/hb-masterplan>

VDOT STATE TRAILS OFFICE

STATE TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Ross Tepe

State Trails Program Manager

Local Assistance Division

Cassi Patterson

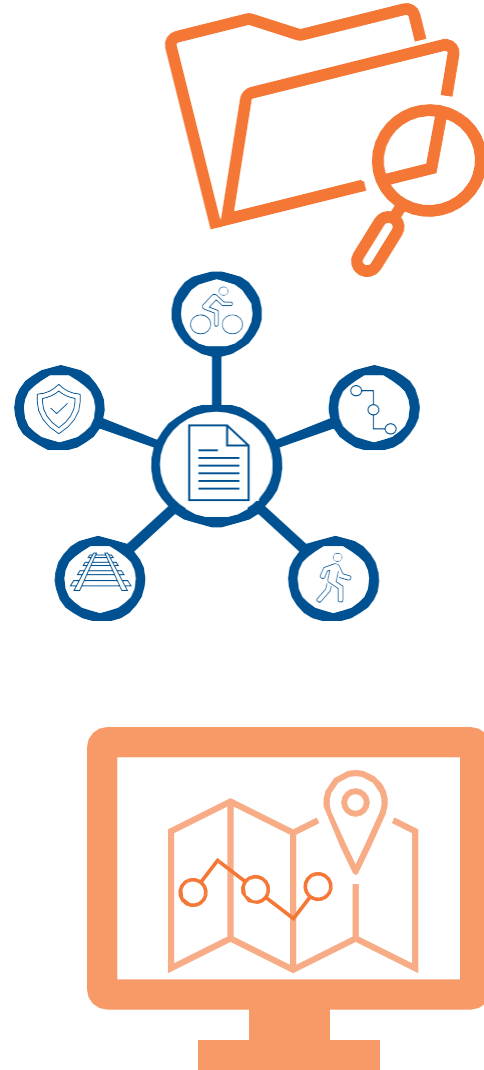
State Trails Program Coordinator

Local Assistance Division

April 28, 2026

What is the State Trails Office?

- **The State Trails Office (STO) was established in January 2023 through a 2022 General Assembly budget amendment**
- **Key initiatives included:**
 - **Develop a State Trails Plan**
 - Establish an Information Clearinghouse / Resource Hub
 - Create a Trail Type and Surface Selection Guide
- **The General Assembly designated funding for priority trails**



Statewide Multiuse Trails Plan

Goal:

"To provide a framework for development of a statewide system of connected trail networks across the Commonwealth and increase trail access for residents and visitors of Virginia."



Statewide Multiuse Trails Plan Overview

Developed in a phased approach:

- **Phase 1**
 - Public outreach and engagement
 - Data collection and methodology
 - State of the existing and planned multiuse trails system
 - Needs assessment
- **Phase 2**
 - Data cleaning and preparation
 - Descriptive elements analysis
 - Results
 - Case studies
 - Next steps



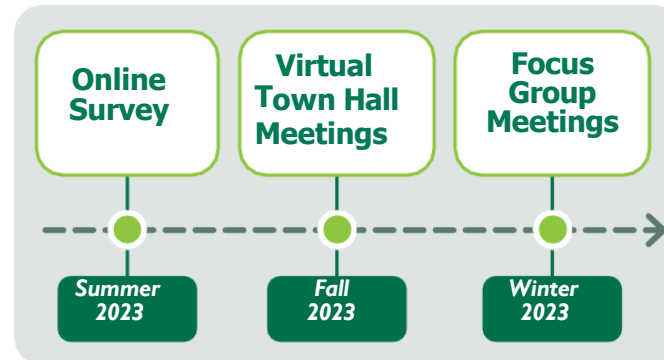
Phase 1 Public Outreach and Engagement

Public Outreach Objectives:

- Understand how residents currently use multiuse trails
- Understand barriers to using multiuse trails
- Understand desires for existing and future multiuse trails

Engagement Methods:

- Online survey
- Virtual town hall meetings
- Focus groups



Phase 1 Public Outreach and Engagement

State Trails Office Advisory Committee:

- Established to help guide the public engagement process, validate the planning process, provide feedback, and promote events across networks
- Included representatives of the following organizations:

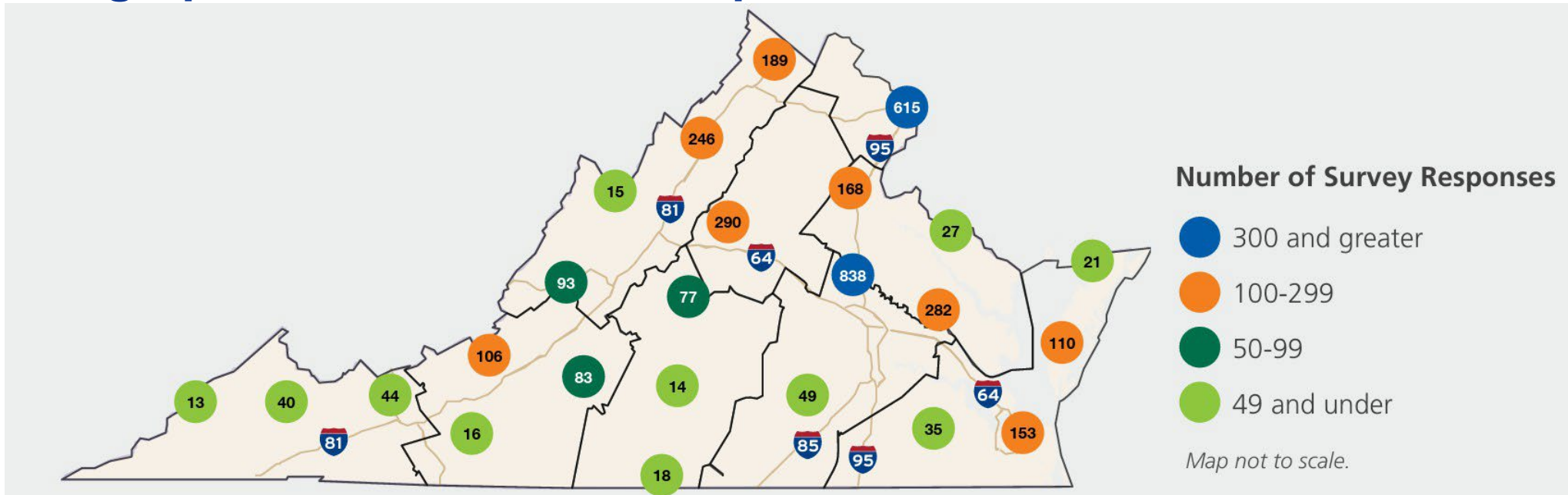


Phase 1 Public Outreach and Engagement

Survey Outcomes:

- **Active September 20, 2023 – October 25, 2023**
- **5,777 Responses**

Geographic Distribution of Responses



Public Outreach and Engagement Outcomes

Public Engagement Takeaways:

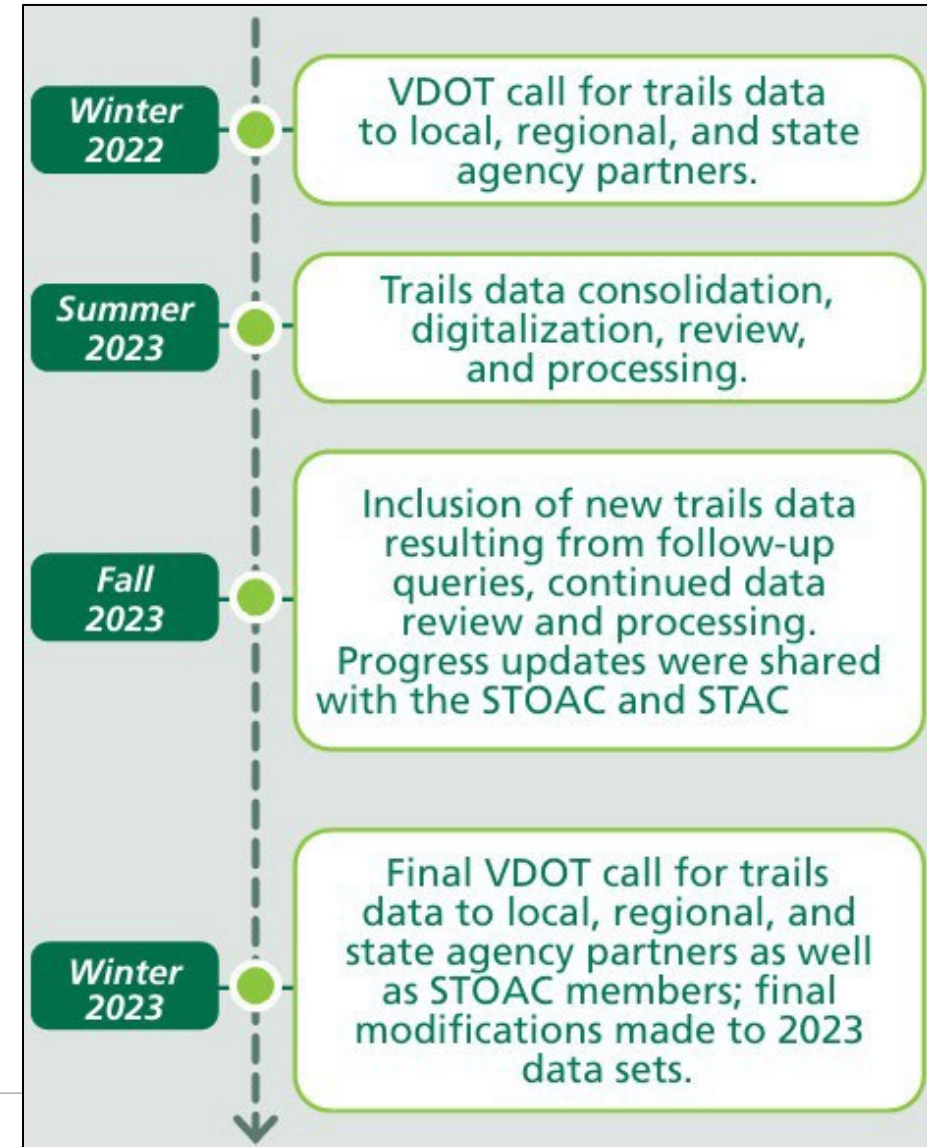
- **Access is the most consistent barrier and desire**
 - Residents want multiuse trails closer to home and connected to everyday destinations
- **Safety concerns**
 - Road-crossing conflicts at intersections
 - Varying modes and speed conflicts on shared use paths
- **Strong desire for trails that provide utility**
 - Access to workplaces, services, recreation, and transit and not just recreation



Public Outreach and Engagement Outcomes

Methodology:

- **Data was drawn from approved local and regional plans**, including active transportation, bike/ped, trails, and greenway plans.
- **Partners were asked to provide key attributes** such as name, type, owner, surface, status, and locality.



Data Collection and Methodology

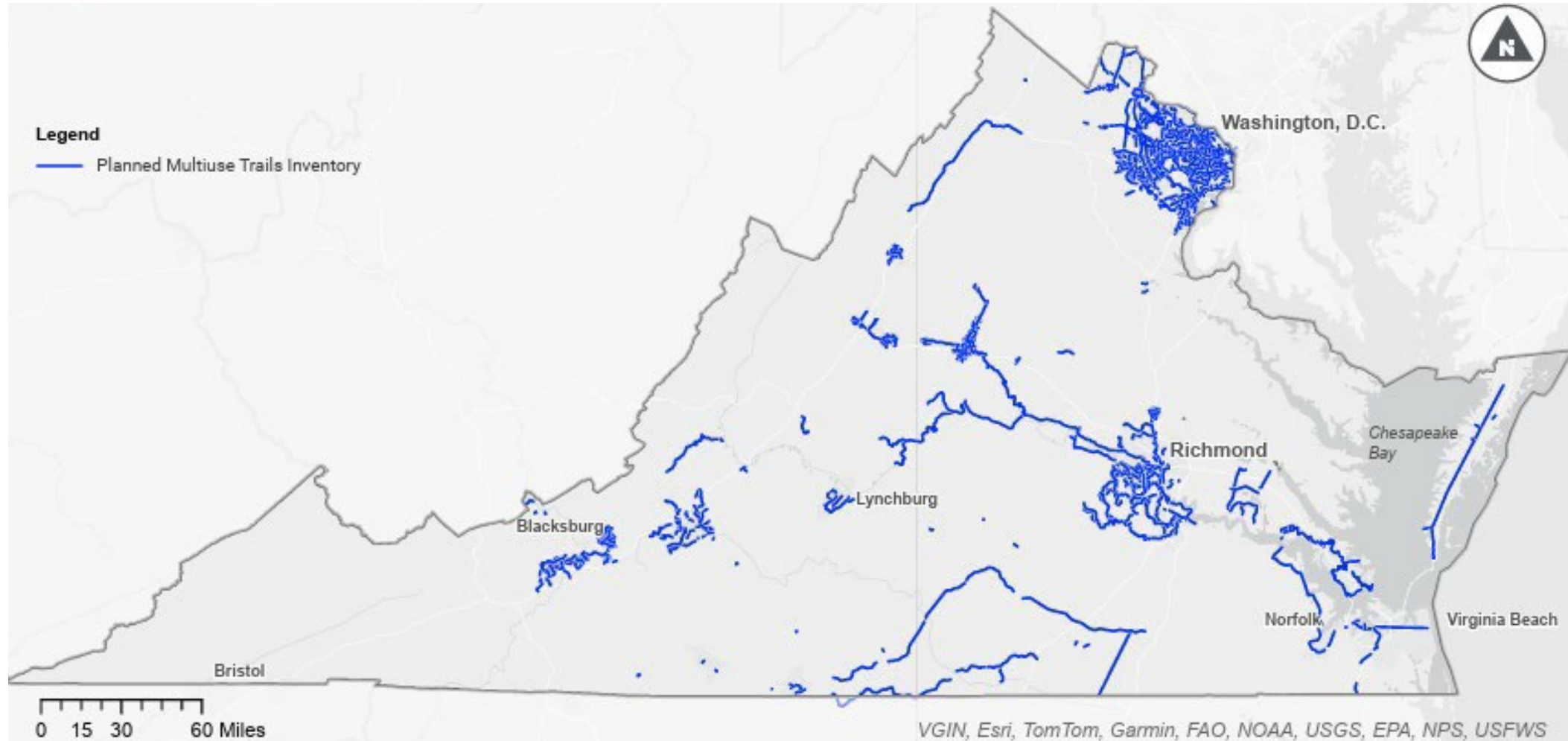
Coordination and Outcomes:

- The 2023 effort underscored the need for a **standardized statewide trails data schema** to ensure accurate, efficient data updates.
- The 2023 trail inventory compiled nearly all available statewide trail data, with only 24 jurisdictions lacking data.
- The data collection efforts compiled over **1,500 miles of existing multiuse trails** and over **2,900 miles of planned multiuse trails**.
- The existing and planned multiuse trails share four core traits
 - Multimodal
 - Safe
 - Accessible
 - Regionally connected



Data Collection and Methodology

Planned Multiuse Trails Inventory:



State of the Multiuse Trails System

Statewide indicators of how the existing and planned multiuse trails serves Virginians:

- Indicators draw from four datasets:
 - Population density (American Community Survey (ACS) 2021)
 - Disadvantaged communities (USDOT/Justice40 + ACS 2021)
 - Job density (Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) 2021)
 - VDOT safety priority corridors (Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) top 1% crash-risk corridors, 2016–2020)

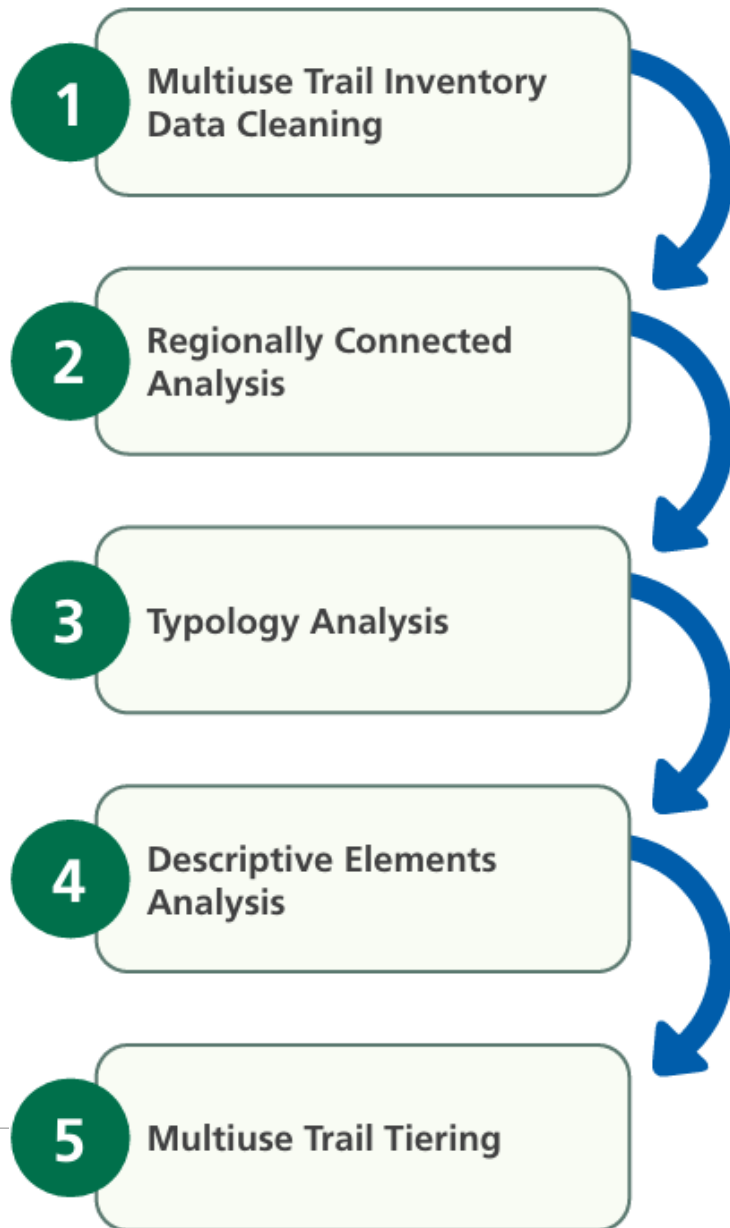


State of the Multiuse Trails System

Indicator	Metric	Statewide Total	Existing Multiuse Trails	Percent within Buffer	Planned Multiuse Trails	Increase	Existing and Planned Multiuse Trails	Percent Within Buffer
Population	People within a half-mile buffer	8,582,479	3,098,094	36.10%	3,325,544	1,217,477	4,315,571	50.28%
Underserved Communities	People in Justice40 census tracts within a half-mile buffer	1,920,205	381,005	19.84%	556,580	325,769	706,774	36.81%
Employment	Jobs within a half-mile buffer	3,635,927	1,746,212	48.03%	1,825,358	519,115	2,265,327	62.30%
Safety	Miles of statewide priority corridors within a half-mile buffer	4,281	2,393	55.91%	2,368	651	3,044	71.12%



State Multiuse Trails Plan - Phase 2 Overview



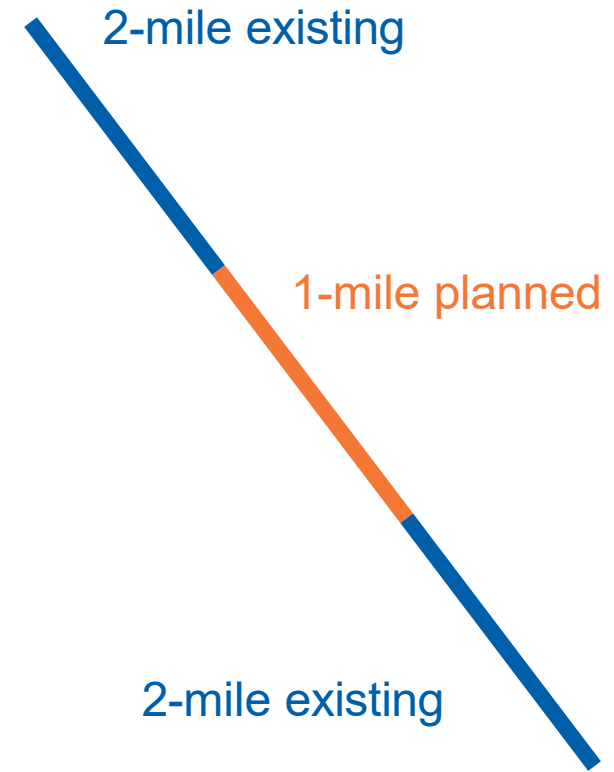
Phase 2 Data Details:

- Phase 2 yielded a more robust dataset of the statewide multiuse trail network, including a preliminary understanding of how individual trails provide potential access and connectivity to a broad range of key destinations and other multimodal facilities.

Regionally Connected – Join by Distance

- Spatial analysis was conducted to identify planned trails that extend or fill the gaps in the existing trail network (0.1 miles distance)
- Length of these combined segments were calculated
- 3-mile threshold applied for trail segment to be regionally connected

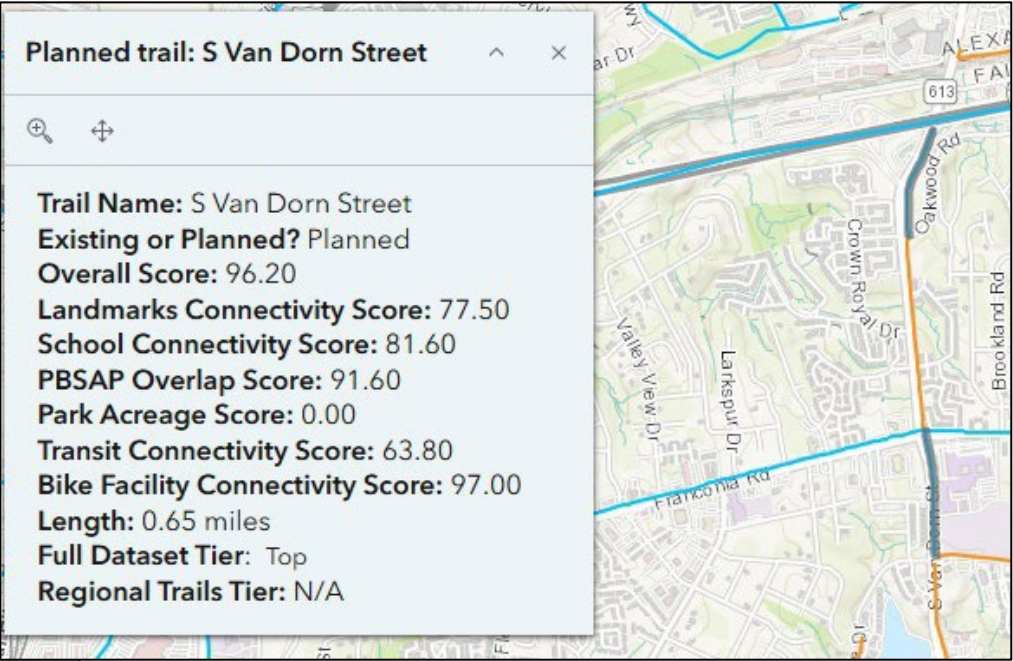
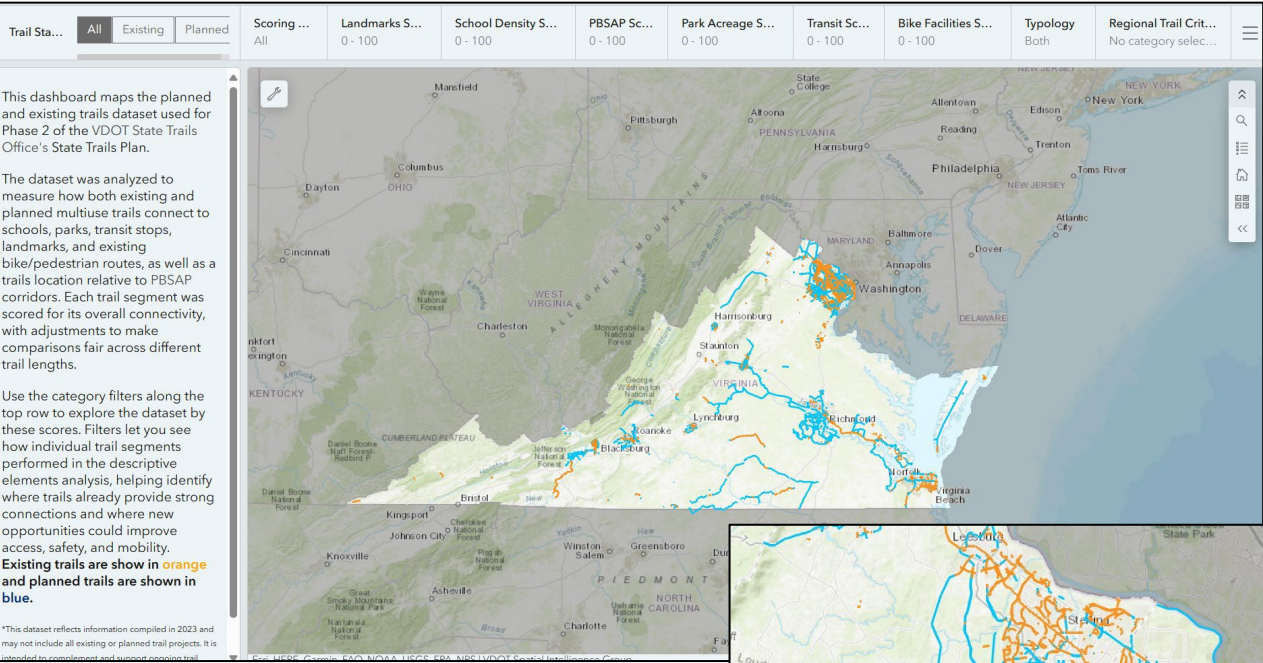
Example: A 1-mile trail that bridges a gap between two 2-mile trails could be considered 5 miles in total length



Phase 2 Trails Data Analysis

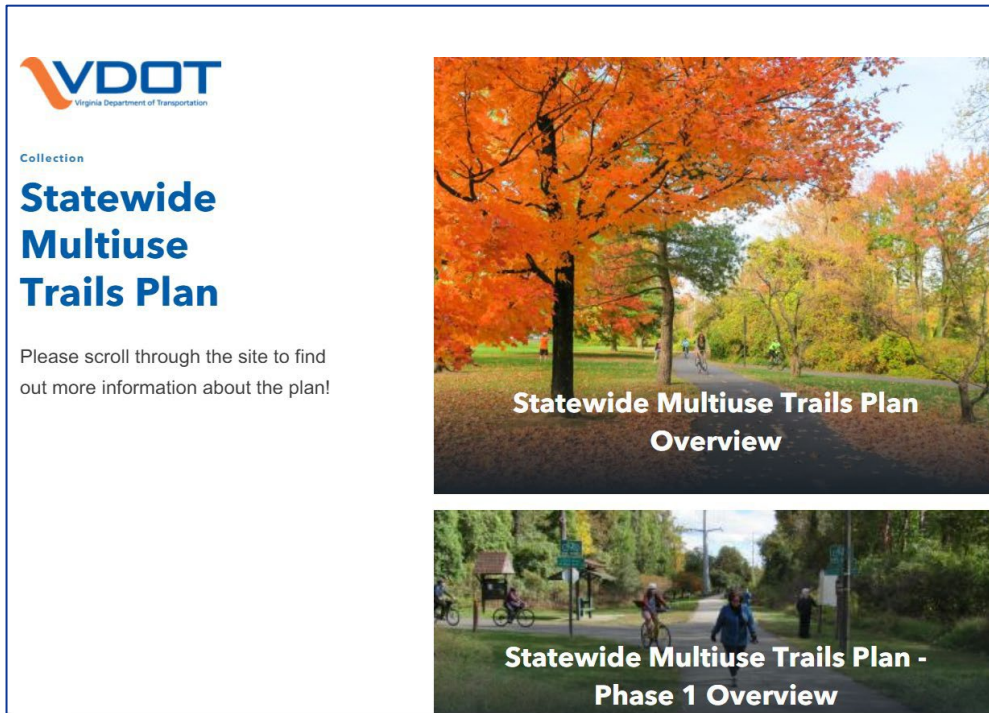
Element	Data Source	Join Distance: High-Density	Join Distance: Low-Distance	Scoring	Notes
Landmarks	VGIN landmarks data (government facilities, libraries)	0.25 miles	0.5 miles	Number of landmarks within set distance of each trail, shown as whole number.	Users are more likely to use trails for commuting or routine travel if located within a 10-minute walk in urban areas or 20-minute walk in rural areas.
Schools	VGIN landmarks data (filtered to schools) and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)	0.25 miles	0.5 miles	Number of public and private schools within set distance of each trail, shown as whole number.	Users are more likely to use trails for commuting or routine travel if located within a 10-minute walk in urban areas or 20-minute walk in rural areas.
Transit Stops	Open-source transit data (DRPT GTFS, Open Street Map)	0.5 miles	1 mile	Number of transit stops within set distance of each trail, shown as whole number.	Users are generally willing to travel farther off-trail to reach transit stops than amenities.
On-Road Bicycle Facilities	VDOT on-road bicycle facilities inventory (designated bike lanes)	500 feet (~0.1mile)	500 feet (~0.1mile)	Total miles of on-road bicycle facilities within set distance of each trail.	Trails can serve as connectors to on-road bicycle facilities.
U.S. and State Bicycle Routes	AASHTO, VDOT maintained bicycle routes, National Park Service	0.5 miles	0.5 miles	Total miles of U.S. and State bicycle routes within set distance of each trail.	Trails can serve as connectors along national U.S. and State bicycle routes.
Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Action	VDOT	500-foot buffer (~0.1mile)	500-foot buffer (~0.1mile)	Total miles of trail that is within set distance of PBSAP facilities that are parallel to regional trails	Trails can serve as alternative travel options along corridors with significant bicycle and pedestrian safety needs, functioning more as replacements than as connections.
Parks	Trust For Public Land (Complete U.S. Park-Serve® Dataset)	0.25 miles	0.5 miles	Total park acreage within a set distance from each trail, shown in acres	The methodology scores park access for both high- and low-density trail typologies, giving trails credit based on the park acreage they connect.

State Multiuse Trails Plan Phase 2



Statewide Multiuse Trails Plan deliverables

PDF version and interactive ArcGIS StoryMap version



Planned Multiuse Trails inventory refresh



Plan Partners and Advocates

Thank you!



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State Trails Office Local Assistance Division

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Break

Developing Trail Condition Assessment Surveys and the Tools to Utilize the Data

Wes Paulos & Michael Holden

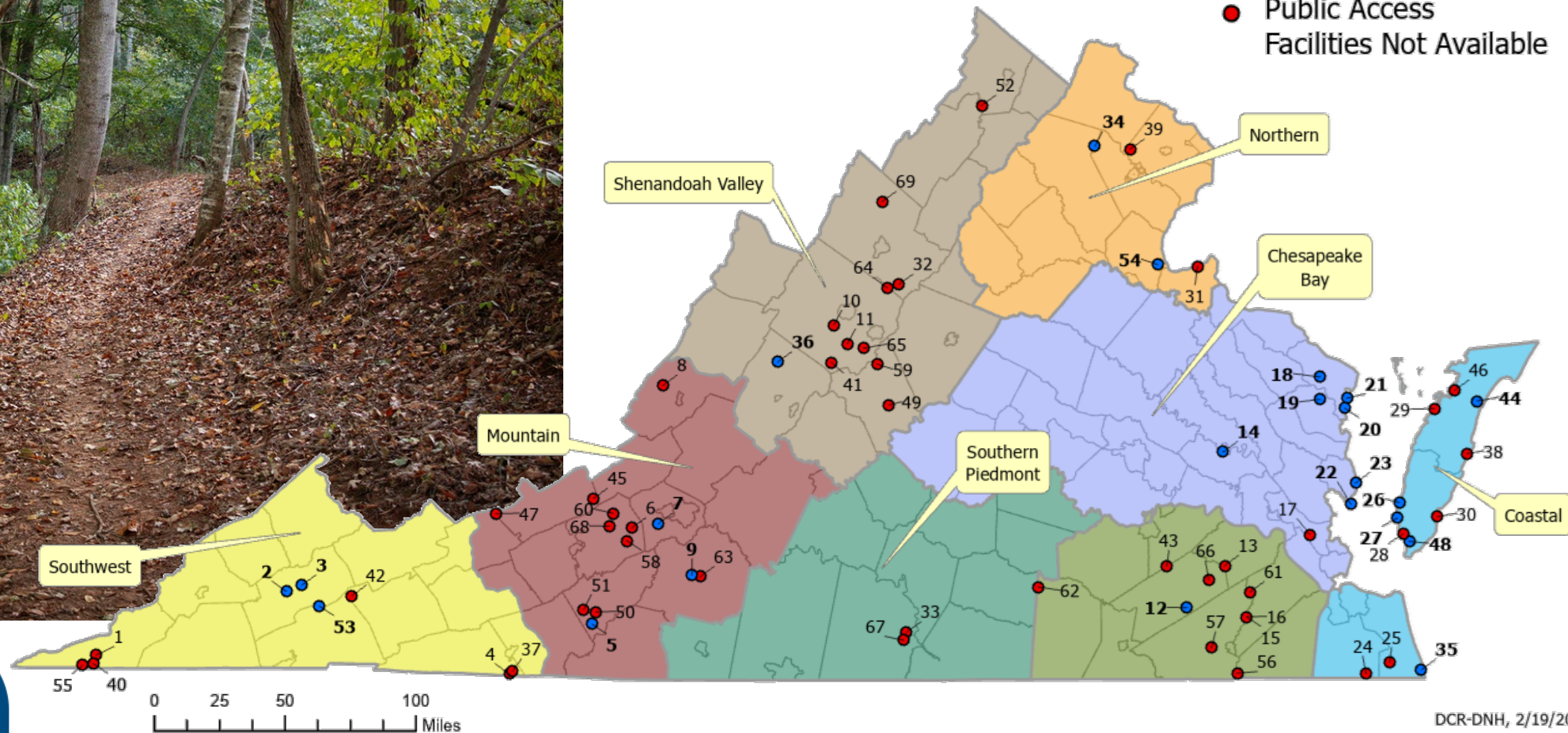
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

Division of Natural Heritage



Why are Trail Assessments Needed?

- **Public Access Facilities Available**
- **Public Access Facilities Not Available**



Trail Assessment Attributes

What types of data are we collecting?

- **Location**
 - Property, trail, coordinates
- **Issue Urgency**
 - Low: Fix w/in 1 year
 - Medium: Fix w/in 6 months
 - High: Fix ASAP
- **Issue Status**
 - Active or Repaired
- **Natural issues**
 - Erosion, flooding, etc.
- **Trail features**
 - Infrastructure (stairs, signage)
 - Natural (slope-related obstacles)
 - Corridor obstructions
- **Anthropogenic impacts**
 - Waste, social trails, vandalism

DNH Trail Assessment Workflow

How we're collecting data – from the office to the field



Survey Creation
Data Collection



Data Storage
Content Admin



Field Navigation
Issue Repair



Data Visualization
Records Updates

Survey123 Connect

Designing, Customizing, & Publishing
Trail Assessment Survey Forms



Survey123: Data Collection

Navigating the Survey123 App and Submitting a Survey Record



Field Maps

Giving Field Staff the (GIS) Tools for Trail Repair



NAP Trail Assessments Web App

Leveraging Data Visualization to Aid in Trail Management



Questions/Acknowledgments

- Thank you to Danielle Kulas for initial survey and dashboard design



1. Scan QR Code for Survey Template
 2. Click the relevant link to download template
 3. Explore the website to learn more about the Virginia Natural Heritage Program
- Additional Survey 123 Information:
 - [Quick reference—ArcGIS Survey123 | Documentation](#)
 - [Guided tour—ArcGIS Survey123 | Documentation](#)
 - Contact us with questions:
 - Wes.paulos@dcr.virginia.gov
 - Michael.holden@dcr.virginia.gov

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-area-preserves/#pubaccess>

Rails with Trails/Pedestrian Crossing Project

Initiation, Coordination and Review

House Bill 2088 and Report 404 - 2009

Background

- For many years, trail developers have been at odds with railroads over needed crossings.
- In 2008, recreational users asked the General Assembly to change the language of the recreational use statute (§ 29.1-509) to specifically grant railroads immunity if recreational use was allowed.
- In 2009, House Bill 2088 was passed to set up a process for reviewing projects for needed recreational crossings
- The process is coordinated by DCR.

General Assembly's Charge

- Develop a process to coordinate and evaluate public recreational access and safety issues directly related to pedestrian crossings.
- Submit a report to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Transportation Committees communicating the results.
- Report 404 resulted from a collaboration with stakeholders and state agencies.
 - Reference guide of design practices.
 - Process to identify recreational interface with rail lines.

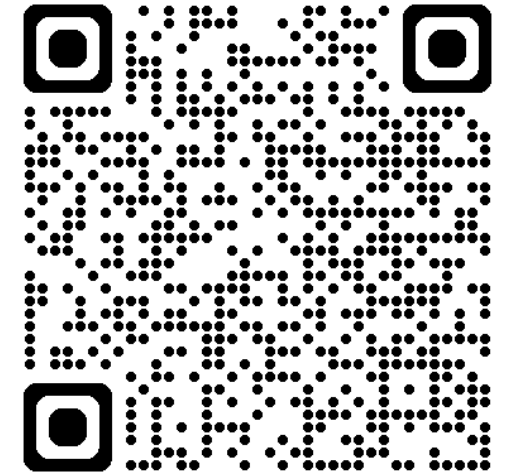
**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



REPORT DOCUMENT NO. 404

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2009**

Link to the report is available on the
web page:
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/rail-trails-crossings>



Rails with Trails/Pedestrian Crossing Proposals for Existing Rail Lines

Rails with trails and pedestrian crossing proposals are coordinated and submitted for review through a single state agency. DCR is the state agency responsible for initial review.

Initial DR reviews only for inclusion of all required information:

- Termini of proposed project
- 7.5' USGS Quad maps with illustrative sketch
- Name of operating Railroad
- Geographic extent of the project (jurisdictions)
- Anticipated sources of funding
- Estimated project cost
- Target group of trail users
- Sponsoring group or jurisdiction and owner of the trail/crossing
- Name and title of applicant contact

Once DCR submits the LOI to the Railroad:

If railroad denies then the process ends.

Applicant can revise and re-apply with new parameters

If railroad accepts DCR informs applicant of any conditions of the acceptance

If applicant decides to proceed then a Formal Trail Plan is submitted for review.

Formal Trail Plan

If the applicant decides to advance the project a Formal Trail Plan is then submitted for review

The Formal Trail Plan should include at a minimum:

- a. The engineered solution to safety and design issues as identified by the railroad
- b. Potential alternatives
- c. Signing plan
- d. Maintenance and operations plan

Thank You!

Salim Chishti, Environmental Program Planner
PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov

Presentation posted on website

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/state-trails>

