

**REPORT OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND  
RECREATION AND THE STATEWIDE TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**CURRENT AND FUTURE PLANS FOR A STATE  
SYSTEM OF ATTRACTIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND  
ENDURING TRAILS ACROSS THE  
COMMONWEALTH**

**TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
CHESAPEAKE AND NATURAL RESOURCES; THE CHAIRMAN OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES; AND THE VICE-CHAIR AND VIRGINIA  
DELEGATION TO THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION**



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
OCTOBER 2016**

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

September 30, 2016

The Honorable Daniel W. Marshall, III  
Chair, Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee  
House of Delegates

The Honorable Richard H. Stuart  
Chair, Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee  
Senate of Virginia

The Honorable L. Scott Lingamfelter  
Vice-Chair, Chesapeake Bay Commission

Members of the Virginia Delegation  
Chesapeake Bay Commission

Dear Delegate Marshall, Senator Stuart, Delegate Lingamfelter and Members of the Commission:

I am pleased to provide you this report, ***Current and Future Plans for a Statewide System of Attractive, Sustainable and Enduring Trails across the Commonwealth***, on behalf of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee. This report is presented in accordance with the provisions of §10.1-204.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. Section 10.1-204.1 directs DCR to convene a Committee to assist the Commonwealth in developing and implementing a statewide system of attractive, sustainable, connected and enduring trails for the perpetual use and enjoyment of the citizens of the Commonwealth and future generations.

This report provides a status on the ongoing work of the committee to include recommendations for the Virginia Outdoors Plan and specific outcomes desired by members as expressed in two meetings of the Committee, held on March 22, 2016 and August 18, 2016, respectively. This report further includes summaries of dialogues with various stakeholder groups and offers specific recommendations addressing resources needed to complete the work outlined in the General Assembly request.

We look forward to continued work with this committee in advancing the development of trails across Virginia.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Clyde E. Cristman

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***State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Outdoor Recreation Planning  
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation***

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## Preface

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This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of § 10.2-204.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. Section A of § 10.1-204.1 stipulates “that the Committee shall be appointed by the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation and shall be composed of a representative from the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. National Park Service; the Virginia Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and nonlegislative citizen members, including representatives from the Virginia Outdoors Plan Technical Advisory Committee and the Recreational Trails Advisory Committee and other individuals with technical expertise in trail creation, construction, maintenance, use, and management.”

The Advisory Committee shall examine and provide recommendations regarding:

- options to close the gaps in a State system of trails as described in § 10.1-204;
- creative public and private funding strategies and partnerships to leverage resources to fund the development of trails;
- integrated approaches to promote and market trail values and benefits;
- the development of specialty trails, including concepts related to old-growth forest trails across the Commonwealth;
- strategies to encourage and create linkages between communities and open space;
- strategies to foster communication and networking among trail stakeholders;
- strategies to increase tourism and commercial activities associated with a State trail system;
- strategies to enhance the involvement of organizations that promote outdoor youth activities, including the Boy Scouts of the U.S.A. and Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and the 4-H program of the Virginia Cooperative Extension; and
- practices, standards, statutes, and guidelines that the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation determines may enhance the effectiveness of trail planning across the Commonwealth, including methods for receiving input regarding potential trail impacts upon owners of underlying or neighboring properties.

The following report provides a status on the ongoing work and the findings and recommendations of the State Trails Advisory Committee assembled in accordance with provisions of this Act for calendar year 2016.

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## 1. Introduction

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This report summarizes work undertaken by the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee from its first report submitted September 30, 2015 to the present. This report documents feedback from committee meetings<sup>1</sup>, several surveys, staff research, and focus group and stakeholder input on statewide trail related topics.

## 2. Virginia Outdoor Plan Recommendations

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The following recommendations are for incorporation into the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan:

### **Integrated approaches to promote and market trail values and benefits:**

- Develop an atmosphere for successful entrepreneurship by obtaining data on trail use from each region to match with data from recreation providers. This data would inform a statewide gap analysis linking the economy with sustainability of trail resources; and
- Create a local network with businesses to identify trail service gaps and produce a report recommending opportunities for entrepreneurs. This information, hosted on a statewide clearinghouse, would list business opportunities in each locality with options to search by theme.

### **Strategies to foster communication and networking among trail stakeholders:**

- Create and expand electronic resources for trails stakeholders (e.g., Facebook, expand distribution of Greenways and Trails e-news, provide Virginia Town Hall link and encourage all committee members to share with their constituents).
- Provide targeted trails workshops (e.g., funding, trail building, partnerships, Governor's Trail Conference).

### **Strategies to increase tourism and commercial activities associated with a State trail system:**

- Prepare an economic analysis for trails, parks and outdoor recreation, identify funding sources, and work with the Virginia Tourism Corporation.
- Market trail value and benefits to include:
  - Health
  - Tourism
  - Hospitality industry
  - Work place improvement (especially for young professionals)
  - History (e.g., Civil War Trails)
  - Increase sky time (i.e., time outdoors without electronics)

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<sup>1</sup> All meeting minutes are available on the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall website ([www.townhall.virginia.gov](http://www.townhall.virginia.gov))

**Creative public and private funding strategies and partnerships to leverage resources to fund the development of trails:**

- Leverage funding for trails with other infrastructure initiatives; and
- Educate localities about transportation funding for trails

**The development of specialty trails, including concepts related to old-growth forest trails across the Commonwealth:**

- Develop regional trail networks with emphasis on connectivity; and
- Strive for an old growth forest, accessible to the public, in every locality.

**Strategies to enhance the involvement of organizations that promote outdoor activities:**

- Identify, utilize and promote existing and successful programs that can facilitate getting youth outdoors; and
- Create programs for having youth train youth to be outdoors (youth leaders).

### 3. State Trail Planning Topics

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The Department of Conservation and Recreation solicited input from the members of the Committee on specific trail related topics. A summary of the Committee’s feedback is as follows:

#### 3.1 **Virginia Outdoors Plan**

**What Virginia trails are overused?**

Input reflected that the Appalachian Trail (McAfee Knob, Mount Rogers), Douthat State Park, Virginia Creeper Trail, Mount Vernon Trail, James River Park System, Washington and Old Dominion Trail, and Old Rag Mountain Trail were overused. While some felt that any trail promoted by tourism could lead to overuse, others felt frequent use was a measure of success. However, it is important to note that parking lots should be constructed to a size that fits the carrying capacity of the trail.

**What types of trail activities do you anticipate will grow over the next 5-10 year?**

Mountain biking, bicycling, hiking, backpacking, trail running, and paddling would grow along with get-healthy initiatives. Use of trails for commuting (transportation) purposes would increase, as would the use of electric-assist vehicles.

**Besides funding, where does the public sector fall short in supporting trail efforts?**

Concerns over potential constraints in using volunteers for trail maintenance and construction were raised. Funding is available in support of trail promotion (tourism) but limited funding is available for maintenance and development. Technical assistance with design, engineering and surfacing—a “go-to” expert in trail building and permitting—is needed to assist volunteers in developing

sustainable projects on the ground and in guiding stewardship efforts.

In spite of broad public support for trails, many individuals do not fully appreciate the economic impacts and quality of life benefits that trails bring to communities. In many urban areas, trails are key transportation resources as well. However, few individuals understand how dependent trails are on volunteer labor and fundraising. Promotion and funding of trails needs political and leadership support.

### **What type of user fee could you support to fund trail development?**

Suggestions ranged from no fee to taxes on retail sales and gasoline. Park or parking fees, annual passes, permits, gate fees, special and group use fees, and donations were other suggestions.

## **3.2 Statewide Trail Sign Plan**

Input from members of the committee suggests that the Department institute a formal designation process to accept trails into the statewide trail network before providing a statewide trail sign. A simple, streamlined designation program would offer a way to track the number of new trails constructed or the number of trail miles developed. Department staff could conduct the application review using general criteria developed with input from the committee.

When asked what benefits this designation could provide localities, answers ranged from “a standard of quality that tourism could rely on,” to mapping, trip planning, joint or coordinated marketing opportunities, and access to funding. Another potential benefit could be an established administrative organization or board on which land managers could participate.

## **4. Youth Engagement Focus Group Summary**

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The following sections summarize focus group feedback obtained through informational sessions, meetings, and discussions conducted by Department staff.

### **4.1 Old Dominion University Parks, Recreation and Tourism Students**

The Department conducted informational sessions about the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the statewide trails program with students in two [parks, recreation and tourism](#) classes at Old Dominion University. Information provided included the Department's youth engagement initiatives, including the career development program, Americorps, Youth Service Corps and Youth Conservation Corps, and the link to seasonal job openings.

Many of the students participating in these sessions had either not hiked on a state trail or were unaware of having hiked a state trail. The students offered various reasons for **not** hiking trails including lack of time, money, motivation, information, transportation, and a lack of excitement. For some, the fear of mockery by more experienced trail users was also a deterrent.

Students felt the most effective outreach efforts to youth were to utilize after school programs, field trips, and presentations. Other ideas to promote the use of trails included:



- Using competitive events or providing incentives such as games and activities to motivate youth to explore trails;
- Posting information on websites, phone apps and social media including Instagram and Pinterest;
- Promotional campaigns with other entertainment venues; and
- Outreach at community fairs and other community events.

## 4.2 Boy Scouts of America

Meeting with representatives from the Boy Scouts of America allowed for discussion of how the Boy Scouts might be further involved with statewide trails. Potential partnerships include using **Order of the Arrow** trail crews for trail construction, sharing updated lists of needed projects to Eagle Scouts, and providing handouts on existing trail excursions to encourage scout visitation.

Each Order of the Arrow trail crew, roughly 25 participants, can construct approximately one-fifth mile of trail per annual outing. Trail crews have constructed approximately 5 miles of trail over the past three years near Covington. Trail crews need adequate planning time, lodging (camping) and meals provided. It was further noted that the trail crew itself does not layout, survey, or flag trails; these tasks require leadership for additional guidance and assistance.

Additional recommendations made by the Boy Scouts include:

- Provide the Boy Scouts with information regarding potential Eagle Scout projects including bike repair stations, trail bridges, signs, and boat put-in locations;
- Develop pamphlets that included parking and camping information, and special natural features and highlights for trails; and
- Participate in the district roundtable to share more information about the trail system.

## 4.3 Girl Scouts of America

Representatives from the [Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia](#) offered strategies to enhance the involvement of the Girl Scout organization with state trails. There are at least three potential areas of mutual interest: the [Hiker](#) badge program, engaging girls at a younger age; the [Journeys](#) program, focused on middle school ages; and the [Gold Award](#) for high school level girls that may offer opportunities to address community problems related to trails.

Incorporating the badge program requirements into a small pilot project in Virginia state parks during a national event such as National Public Lands Day and including educational stations would assist the Girl Scout with earning her badge. Recommended educational topics for these stations included information and guidance for deciding where to hike, attempting a new hiking skill, leaving no trace, completing the hike successfully, and bring the necessary supplies such as snacks, clothing, and shoes. Additionally, a pilot program would encourage additional Girl Scouts to hike, as well as the Girl Scouts' families.

Other ideas offered by the Girl Scouts include:

- Ensure volunteers are matched to the need for volunteers and there is interest in the activity;
- Coordinate with the Girl Scouts to develop a badge similar to the Hiker badge for older Girl Scouts; and
- Develop a central web-based site where volunteers are able to see which events need volunteers.

#### **4.4 Virginia Cooperative Extension: 4-H Program**

In discussing the potential involvement of the 4-H programs with statewide trails initiatives, developing a trail curriculum for the 4-H team leader program presents a possible partnership opportunity. Programs offered through the 4-H program such as forestry judging, plant identification, wildlife habitat, family hikes, orienteering, water quality, bicycling, nature photography, and service learning (trail crews) could provide for further involvement in initiatives. Additional recommendations and opportunities discussed include:

- Connect local trail groups with the local 4-H program to educate and share information and partnering opportunities such as service learning and enhancing existing curriculum;
- Secure funding for a statewide event coordinator responsible for developing, promoting, and conducting trail events across the state such as “4-H Bike Across Virginia”;
- Develop a “Master Trail Blazer or Boss” program for teens providing opportunities to practice and develop leadership skills and service learning in which teens could become trail advocates; and
- Create a trail passport or checklist system for youth and families encompassing different educational aspects of various trails, encouraging frequent visiting of many of the state trails. A completed passport could entitle the holder to a reward such as a patch or small ceremony.

### **5. Old-Growth Forest Specialty Trails Focus Group Summary**

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The following sections summarize input received regarding the concept of old-growth forests interfacing with the statewide trails system under the category of “specialty trails.”

#### **5.1 Virginia United Land Trust Conference Participants**

During the annual conference of Virginia's United Land Trusts, attendees participated in an interactive session held on statewide trails and provided feedback on potential funding sources, prioritization of land conservation efforts, and the interface between old growth forests and trails.

Participants in the session recommended the following potential funding sources for trails:

- Community Foundations (for smaller projects);
- Purchase of Development Rights (at the local level);

- Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program;
- Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF);
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at both the state and federal level; and
- Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Fund.

Suggestions for the prioritization of land conservation efforts include:

- Focus on linking existing protected areas or existing corridors;
- Prioritize based on community feedback; and
- Concentrate on land with overlapping benefits, such as water quality benefits and improvements.

Considerations offered regarding the role of old growth forests and trails include:

- Examine what other states are doing to promote old growth forests;
- Connect to the Century Forest Program;
- Work with U.S. Forest Service to ensure the continued existence of old growth forests;
- Further the Virginia Natural Heritage Program's inventory of old growth forest;
- Engage with the 500 Year Forest Foundation;
- Utilize federal wilderness areas to interface with trails;
- Consider how to expand the State Natural Area Preserve System, of which conservation of old growth forest is a part; and
- Consult the Virginia Natural Area Preserve Management Guidelines in considering management issues.

## **5.2 500-Year Forest Foundation**

The 500-Year Forest Foundation works to conserve mature forests and the biologically diverse species those forests nurture. While in some instances, the 500-Year Foundation may hold an easement on forest lands, the Foundation will partner with other organizations, such as the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, to preserve the old growth forests. The Foundation typically focuses on forests that are 100 acres or more with trees at least 70 years old. The Foundation provides management guidance including the development of a forest management plan and methods to control invasive species. While existing old growth forest characteristics preclude heavily travelled trails, there may be an opportunity for the 500-Year Forest Foundation to hold easements along state trails that meet certain criteria.

Recently, the Foundation created a new category of forests, *Cooperating Forests*, which are smaller in size and younger in age. Trail section managers could connect landowners to the Foundation for help with managing the forest. The Foundation could be a key partner in connecting the old growth

forests with trails in the future and demonstrating to the public the value of managing forests for old growth as a worthwhile effort.

### 5.3 Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Natural Heritage

The Division of Natural Heritage has previously collaborated with the Old Growth Forest Network (OGFN), a network that works to ensure areas, which have potential to become an old growth forest (old age forest) and accessible to the public, are protected. OGFN strives to have at least one forest area, either old growth forest or an old age forest, from each county held in its registry and available for public use.

Cooperating with OGFN, the committee may work to ensure that there is a forest area within each county and an ability for the public to walk through a local forest. In places where existing trails go through old growth forest or old age forest, educational information, including the value of these forests, could be provided to the public. Old-aged forests provide habitat for nesting, foraging, and shelter for numerous birds and mammals, as well as salamanders and arthropods. In general, old-aged forests harbor more plant and animal species than younger forests and act as genetic reservoirs for future forest research, restoration, and conservation.

Several recommendations related to old growth forests and old age forests include:

- Utilize the valuable and effective working definitions of old growth forest communities developed by the U.S. Forest Service;
- Focus on existing trails, rather than developing new multi-use trails, which could fragment the forests and allow for the encroachment of invasive species; and
- Map the existing natural communities that are likely to have old growth that occur along statewide trail corridors.

## 6. Historic Specialty Trails

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The National Trails System Act<sup>2</sup> defines four categories of trails: recreation, scenic, connecting and historic. However, Virginia’s statewide trails system language<sup>3</sup> does not include a historic trail category. Historic trails may best fit under the “specialty” trails category in accordance with § 10.1-201.1 (B) of the *Code of Virginia*. Several groups have come forward seeking assistance and guidance with historic trail development as summarized below:

### 6.1 Virginia Great Valley Road-Lewis and Clark Legacy Trail (VGV-LCELT)

The portion of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail that runs through the Commonwealth was designated by the General Assembly as the *Lewis and Clark Eastern Legacy Trail in Virginia* in 2015 (HJR566, 2015). The Mountain Valley Preservation Alliance, Inc. (MVPA), a regional preservation organization, envisions the development and implementation of a trail route extending from Washington County to Albemarle County along the **Virginia Great Valley – Lewis & Clark Eastern**

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<sup>2</sup> 16 U.S. Code § 1241

<sup>3</sup> COV §10.1-204

**Legacy Trail (VGV-LCELT).** The VGV-LCELT is just one of six trail segments in the Commonwealth identified by the National Park Service (NPS) as pieces of the potential eastward expansion of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

During the six years of planning for a Lewis & Clark Eastern Legacy Trail in Virginia, involved communities viewed the project as a partnership between many stakeholders; implementation costs would be a shared responsibility. A number of communities and organizations have already provided financial support for specific activities in their areas. This initiative has grown from a four to ten counties project to a project with the potential of up to twenty-two counties involved (plus independent cities).

The current trail project consists of ten county or city committees led by a chairman or contacts that operate under the auspices of the MVPA. Until August 2016, this trail effort, under the guidance of the NPS, focused on potential national designation as an extension of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. However, the decision of the NPS Advisory Board to exclude all Virginia trail segments from national designation left the growing Virginia project without a mechanism to guide planning, development, and implementation.

Representatives of the MVPA believe the purpose, interest, and role of the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee is consistent with the interests and current needs of the VGV-LCELT. MVPA has been asked to present examples of VGV-LCELT activities and events that are compatible and intertwine with the Advisory Committee's current and future plans at the next committee meeting. MVPA has also requested that the Advisory Committee recommend the allocation of additional Department staff time for further planning, development, and trail implementation. MVPA recognizes that the request for additional Department support may require approval of additional staff and related financial appropriations.

## **6.2 Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail**

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route was designated a National Historic Trail (NHT) by Congress (PL 111-11) and signed by the President in March 2009. The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT commemorates over 700 miles of land and water routes followed by the troops under General George Washington and the French general, the Comte de Rochambeau, in 1781. The trail, as it passes through 10 states from Boston to Virginia Beach, connects and links many units of the National Park System<sup>4</sup>, which share common themes and resources. The NHT partners and shares resources with the connecting Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The land and water sites along the route offer opportunities for recreation, heritage education, land conservation, tourism, historic preservation, and research.

The National Park Service (NPS) administers the trail in collaboration with other federal agencies, states, non-profit organizations, local agencies, and patriotic groups. The NPS provides information, education and interpretation guidance, planning and technical assistance, and financial help. Representatives of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route look forward to establishing a partnership with Virginia and including the Virginia Departments of Conservation and Recreation

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<sup>4</sup> In Virginia, this includes Prince William Forest Park, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, and Colonial National Historical Park.

and Transportation, the tourism and historic preservation offices, and others to achieve the shared goals of preservation, education, recreation and tourism focusing on the American Revolution.

The NPS is pursuing several projects including preparing and submitting grant applications to the American Battlefield Protection Program for interpretative materials for the Battle off the Capes in the Cape Charles and Cape Henry area and to document resources at Gloucester Point. The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT offers an opportunity to interpret and connect Virginia Revolutionary War sites from Virginia Beach, Jamestown, Yorktown, Williamsburg, Fredericksburg, Mount Vernon, and Alexandria and revolutionary sites throughout the Chesapeake Bay.

The NPS would like to explore plans for describing, promoting, signing and interpreting the route in Virginia. The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route could be the basis for connecting resources the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution approaches, educating people about the history and establishing links, by land and water, between sites and communities; and identifying and conserving important resources and promoting tourism in Virginia and throughout the region. The following suggestions were offered for consideration:

- Recognize and include the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route in the Virginia Outdoors Plan, tourism, byways and preservation plans;
- Consider adding historic trails to the mission of the statewide trail advisory group;
- Develop a map of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route and sites and convene work sessions to discuss future opportunities and next steps;
- Consider a governor’s proclamation, executive order, state legislation, and/or entering into an agreement with NPS; and
- Explore or create a Revolutionary War “auto byways” or heritage corridor that connects Alexandria to Yorktown and all points in between also including the Chesapeake, John Smith sites, the Potomac, East Coast Greenway, etc.

## 7. Statewide Trails Advisory Committee Support

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Staff time allocated to support the committee and comply with the provisions of the Code increased to 60% of one full time position for this reporting year. This support included planning and coordinating committee meetings, conducting focus groups interviews, researching fees charged for neighboring state’s trails and preparing materials for Virginia Outdoors Plan meetings in response to committee recommendations.

### 7.1 State Trail Fees Benchmarking

Staff contacted surrounding states to determine whether entrance or use fees are in place for their state trails. With few exceptions, trails are free in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina. In a few cases, parking fees are charged. This general practice may have contributed to the expectation that trail access and use will be free in Virginia. Where fees are charged, land managers have a greater duty of care.

## 7.2 Virginia Outdoors Plan Meeting Materials

In an effort to address the committee’s recommendations regarding tourism and promotion efforts by local governments, Department staff prepared a handout on *Capturing Trail-Based Tourism* in partnership with the Virginia Tourism Corporation. Department staff further developed a simple template for a trail brochure, along with a handout on resources available through the Virginia Tourism Corporation. These documents were provided at Virginia Outdoor Plan meetings held throughout the state in an effort to reach local government trail planners and community development professionals. (Appendix A)

## 7.3 Spring 2017 Conference and Future Events

The Virginia United Land Trusts will hold their annual conference in partnership with the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee on April 25-27, 2017 in Williamsburg. This conference is a great opportunity to solicit feedback from the public and land trusts on topics that have been raised through the committee’s work. Department staff will work to highlight the Virginia Capital Trail and the progress made on the Appomattox River Trail at this event, along with successes along all six of Virginia’s statewide trails.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Trails System Act is October 2, 2018 and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Virginia’s statewide trails system will coincide with the sunset of this committee’s work in 2021, providing for the potential to program future events for these anniversary years.

## 7.4 Staffing Needs

The following list captures trail program staff needs expressed by focus groups, staff and committee members:

<b>Existing Position</b>	<b>Key Duties</b>	<b>Background/Training</b>
Statewide Trails Coordinator	Support statewide trail implementation, coordination with other land management/ outdoor recreation agencies, database development and management. (Note: In 2016, as a result of the statewide trails legislation, the percentage of this position’s time devoted to statewide trails was expanded from 30% to 60%; other major duties of the position include planning for the Va. Outdoors Plan and State Park Master Plans).	Planner, GIS technician
<b>Additional Staff Needs</b>	<b>Key Duties</b>	<b>Background/Training</b>
Planner— Specialty Trails, Outreach, Community and Youth Engagement	Specialty trail development, research, coordination with other agencies (VTC, VDOT, DHR). Coordinate efforts to link youth to trail initiatives through existing programs such as Scouts, 4-H, Va. State Parks Youth Conservation Corps, Your Backyard Classroom, etc.	Planner, social media expert

Planning Manager	Staff management/ supervision, budgets, community engagement, specialty trail oversight, standards development and oversight, policy development and review, state/federal legislation compliance, reporting, quality control/ accuracy of information, partnership/ MOU development.	Management, communication, public administration
Trails Planner/ Technician	Provide technical assistance to localities in trail design/ layout, trail construction, permitting, railroad crossing review in compliance with HB2088 (Report 404)	Planner/ Engineer/Architect

## 8. Conclusion

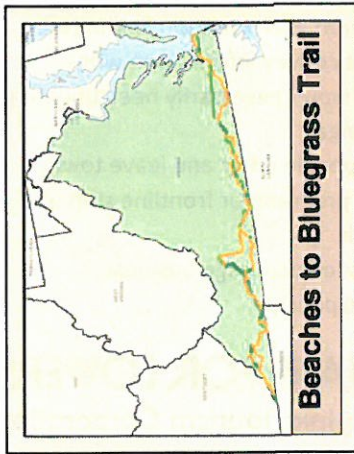
The Statewide Trails Advisory Committee recognizes that establishing a system of statewide trails is a significant undertaking. Development of such a system would require the involvement of numerous, diverse stakeholders including state and federal government agencies, local governments, private organizations and individuals, and non-profit organizations. The committee investigated many of the key issues involved with construction of a system of statewide trails. Additional dialogue and research will continue throughout the next year.

Key questions regarding the development of a statewide trail system remain including how to link existing trails and how to ensure the system of trails meet the transportation, recreation, public health, and economic development needs of the communities. The committee has identified specific areas of needed support:

- Support sufficient staffing to administer and carry out the State Trails Program and to manage related capital projects;
- Support new state funding for trails from either bonds or general funds;
- Support a Governor’s Conference on Trails; and
- Support a state park bond of at least \$500 million.

At future meetings, the committee will continue to examine the critical issues facing the development of a statewide system of trails as well as the potential development of a Governor's Conference on Greenways and Trails.





**Beaches to Bluegrass Trail**

**SAMPLE:** This trail is part of the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, a developing statewide shared-use path and multi-use trail that will connect communities between the Virginia Beach Oceanfront and Cumberland Gap, providing residents and visitors in southern Virginia with increased opportunities for walking, bicycling, and horseback riding.

Connect your trail section to a long-distance trail if applicable. If your trail is part of a statewide trail, insert statewide trail thumbnail map and description.

## Share your trail experience!

*Share your trail pictures with us:  
Insert applicable hashtags*



Trail Agency or Organization  
Street Address  
City, ST ZIP

Recipient  
Street Address  
City, ST ZIP Code



# Trail Name

**Details about trail location or part of larger trail**



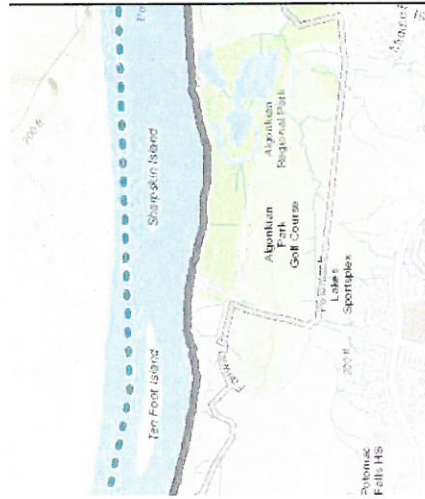
Insert action photo that includes typical trail users

Local logos here and a QR code to trail website if available



## Experience the Trail name!

- Describe what a day-user needs to know about your trail, like where to find restrooms, water, etc. For equestrian trails, where can horses find water?
- Describe what a multi-day user needs to know about your trail, if applicable like where camping is permitted, mileage to next visitor service area, etc.
- If your trail hosts occasional special events that trail users may want to either attend or avoid, where do they find an event schedule?



This trail is located within (park name) in (jurisdiction) near the (geographic feature). Use the VOP Mapper or Open Street Map to create a quick map if you need one.



This (length) trail welcomes (hikers, bikers and equestrians) looking for an (easy, moderate difficult) challenge. Allow (range of hours) to (hike, bike or ride) to (where). Include a picture that gives a sense of the trail's surface and character

## Reviews

"We hiked for 20 minutes and came upon a beautiful cascading waterfall."

--Name (highlight point of interest or why people use this trail)

"Tough going at first, but the view at the end was phenomenal."

--Name (highlight the reward for the effort)

## Staying overnight?

- Campground info
- Lodging info

## Trail services

- Bike repair or rental info?
- Shuttle service info or transit connection?
- Equestrian services?

## After the trail

- Grab a craft beer from ?
- Shop at the ? gift shop

## Trailhead parking

GPS location:

911 Address:

Hours:

Website:

Phone:

Fees:

For long-term parking, contact (whom, if not allowed at trailhead?)

If the parking lot is full, park (where, if this has been an issue?)

Do parking areas and entrance roads permit horse trailers, buses and other large vehicles to park and turn around? If not, address limitations on vehicle size here.

Are some trail uses restricted? Emphasize here.



# CAPTURING TRAIL-BASED TOURISM

## **COLLECT**

- Data on trail use and locations of existing trail related business
- Information on the economic impacts of trail users in your community
- Advertising content (high resolution action photos and compelling narratives)
- Information on businesses hours and customer needs

## **MAP**

- Post office or shipping facility
- Outfitters
- Equipment (bike) rental and repair
- Food services
- Lodging
- Campgrounds and equestrian camping
- Convenience stores
- Safe bike storage
- Restrooms
- Shuttles or other transportation service
- Transit connections
- WIFI connections/services
- 24-hour ATMs
- Laundromats
- Museums and historical societies
- Libraries
- Vending machines
- Medical services
- Drug stores
- Parks, trails and water access
- Tourist information centers
- Parking
- Picnicking
- Mileage chart
- Website or QR code for more information
- Gas stations that accommodate horse trailers
- Stabling, if not on-site
- Veterinarians

## **REMEMBER**

- Your neighbor's success is important to your success
- Review and adapt your strategies and celebrate success

## **FOCUS ON**

- Trail user "pay-off" by pairing outdoor recreation with culinary or agritourism activities
- Safe, well-marked trail connections to shopping, entertainment and exploration areas
- Nurturing the leadership and initiative necessary to make your community "trail-friendly"

## **ENCOURAGE**

- Visitation by adding your experiences to Virginia Tourism website and Travel blog
- Businesses to expand by offering additional services (for example, equipment repair or shuttles)
- Businesses to form a network to report service gaps and promote opportunities for entrepreneurs the formation of tourism zones to attract businesses that complement the trail experience
- Design of attractive physical amenities
- Restaurants to offer vegan and vegetarian options on their menu
- Partnerships and cross promotion
- Public accessible restrooms in businesses
- Artwork and window displays that reflect local culture and heritage
- Law enforcement agents that also serve as trail ambassadors
- Businesses to offer regional products and information

## **CREATE**

- On-site signage and wayfinding signs
- Marketing campaigns that direct trail users to existing businesses
- An organizational structure to coordinate community improvements and events
- A business recruitment and retention committee
- Signs and maps that convey information with generic symbols that won't necessarily need updating when businesses change
- Gateway points as people enter and leave town
- Hospitality training program for frontline staff in restaurants and hotels
- Financial incentives to encourage business development and expansion



**VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS**  
Virginia Tourism Corporation