



CHAPTER 8  
*Trails*

**Definitions**

**Trail**-A linear route on land or water with protected status and public access for recreation or transportation purposes such as walking, jogging, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, backpacking and vehicular travel by motorcycle or all-terrain vehicles. (from Trails for the Twenty-First Century)

**Greenway**-1) A linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route. 2) Any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage. 3) An open-space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas. 4) Locally, certain strip or linear parks designated as a parkway or greenbelt. (from Greenways for America).

**Active Transportation**- Any form of human-powered transportation that uses physical activity to travel from one destination to another. (Active Transportation Guidebook)

According to the 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey (VODS), 43 percent of Virginians ranked trails as the most needed recreational opportunity. A higher percentage of urban residents mentioned trails as most needed. Trail facilities support many popular outdoor recreation activities, including walking for pleasure, jogging and running, horseback riding, hiking and backpacking, and bicycling (Figure 8.1). For the first time in the survey’s history, the popularity of walking and running challenge-based events were polled. Nineteen percent of respondents said they participate in these events, an important source of funding for event promoters.

**Figure 8.1 Participation in Trail Activities Statewide**

activity	% households
Walking for pleasure	67
Jogging/running	24
Hiking/backpacking day trips	21
Walks/runs/challenge-based events	19
Paved or gravel bicycle trails	11
Bicycle touring on roads	9
Fitness trails (not jogging)	9
Equestrian Events	7
Mountain biking	6
Driving 4-wheel off road (Jeep, truck)	6
ATV or UTV off-road	6
Horseback riding	4
Driving motorcycle off road/dirt bike	2
Segway on sidewalks and paths	1
Electric-assist bicycle on road or trails	<1

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey

**Wheeled Activities**

Different types of wheeled activities were included in the 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey. Results show that Virginians enjoy using trails in a number of ways and purchase or rent equipment to support their trail activities. While bicycling has the highest participation rates, motorized and ATV or UTV off-road driving is gaining popularity as more opportunities are developed.

**Figure 8.2 Participation in Wheeled Activities**

activity	% households
Paved or gravel bicycle trails	11
Bicycle touring on roads	9
Mountain biking	6
Driving 4-wheel off road (Jeep, truck)	6
Driving ATV or UTV off-road	6
Driving motorcycle off road/dirt bike	2
Segway on sidewalks and paths	1
Electric-assist bicycle on road or trails	<1

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey

**Equestrian Activities**

Of the households that participated in equestrian activities in 2017 (7 percent), the vast majority (77.6 percent) engaged in trail riding. Many of the equestrian activities measured in the survey rely on both public and private trail facilities (see page 18, VODS). As private facilities are lost to development, more pressure is placed on the public sector to meet demand.

**Trail Usage**

Figure 8.3 shows the top reasons trails remain one of the most popular and most needed outdoor recreation facilities—supporting a healthy mind, body and spirit.

**Figure 8.3 Top Four Reasons for Using Trails**

	% households
Pleasure and relaxation	88.2
Experiencing scenery and the natural environment	70.6
Health and physical training	64.8
Family and social outings	50

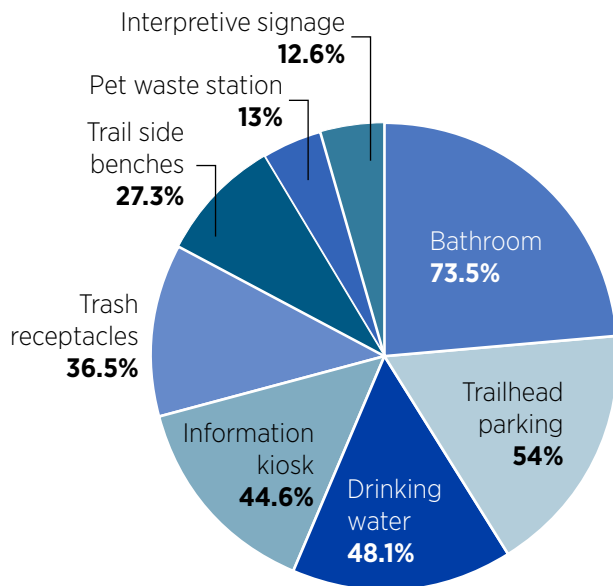
Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey

### Recreational Trail Amenities

Local, state and homebuyer surveys consistently affirm the desirability of trails, but there is less information on what facilities are needed along trails. Figure 8.4 ranks the importance of eight amenities that support trail users.

Bathrooms (73 percent) are the most important amenity for trail users. Over half (54 percent) of all trail users indicated trailhead parking was important. Less than half desired drinking water (48.1 percent), information kiosks (44.6 percent) trash receptacles (36.5 percent) and benches (27.3 percent). Thirteen percent of survey responses mentioned a need for pet waste stations and interpretive signage.

**Figure 8.4 Trails Amenities Considered Most Important**

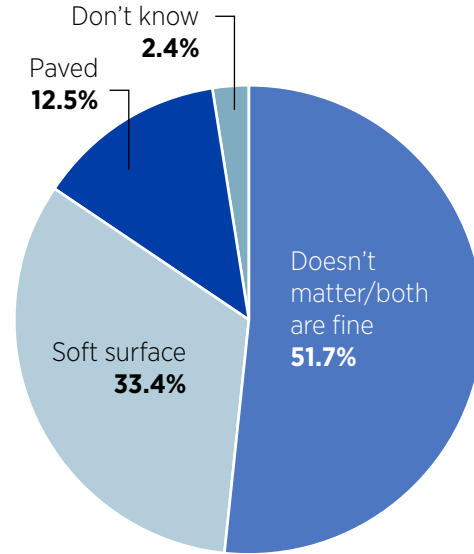


Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey – Since responses could name multiple amenities, percentages were greater than 100

### Trail Surfaces

Survey respondents did not indicate a strong preference for trail surface overall, but there may be strong preferences among user groups in specific settings. For example, hikers in scenic and remote areas may prefer unpaved, natural trails. Participants in wheeled activities may prefer paved surfaces. Trail planners should consider both supply and demand and short- and long-term cost constraints when determining the surface treatment for their trail project.

**Figure 8.5 Trail Surface Preferences**



Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey

### Trail Demand Based on Regional Input

Each year during development of the Virginia Outdoors Plan, DCR staff met with outdoor recreation stakeholders, professionals and trail advocates in the 21 recreation regions to monitor progress on recreation facility development. High priority “featured” projects are listed by region in Chapter 13. Fifty-six percent of all featured projects relate to trail development.

### State Trails Advisory Committee – HB1542

Cumulative demand for trails across the state led the General Assembly to craft legislation in 2015 directing DCR to establish a State Trails Advisory Committee (STAC) 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.”

Appointed by DCR’s director, the committee includes representatives from the Virginia 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 director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and non-legislative citizen members from the Virginia Outdoors Plan Technical Advisory Committee and the Recreation Trails Advisory Committee. Other members include individuals with technical expertise in trail planning, construction, maintenance, use and management. The committee meets twice a year and makes recommendations on these tasks outlined by the General Assembly:

- Closing the gaps in a statewide system of trails.
- Funding strategies and partnerships to leverage resources for trail development.
- Promoting and marketing trail values and benefits.
- Developing specialty trails, e.g., old-growth forest trails.
- Encouraging and creating community and open-space linkages.
- Fostering communication and networking among trail stakeholders.
- Increasing tourism and commercial activities related to a statewide trails system.
- Encouraging involvement of organizations promoting youth activities.
- Identifying and supporting practices, standards, statutes and guidelines enhancing statewide trail planning including input from adjacent and nearby property owners.
- Increasing resources for local trail development.
- Increasing funding for trail maintenance and operations, especially in rural areas.
- Providing guidance for prioritizing trail projects.
- Balancing trail user needs and conflicts including addressing surfacing to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act standards.
- Marketing trails through tourism—inside and outside Virginia.
- Meeting stormwater standards.

The committee identified the following major challenges related to trail development:

- Improving the availability of grant funding for trail development.

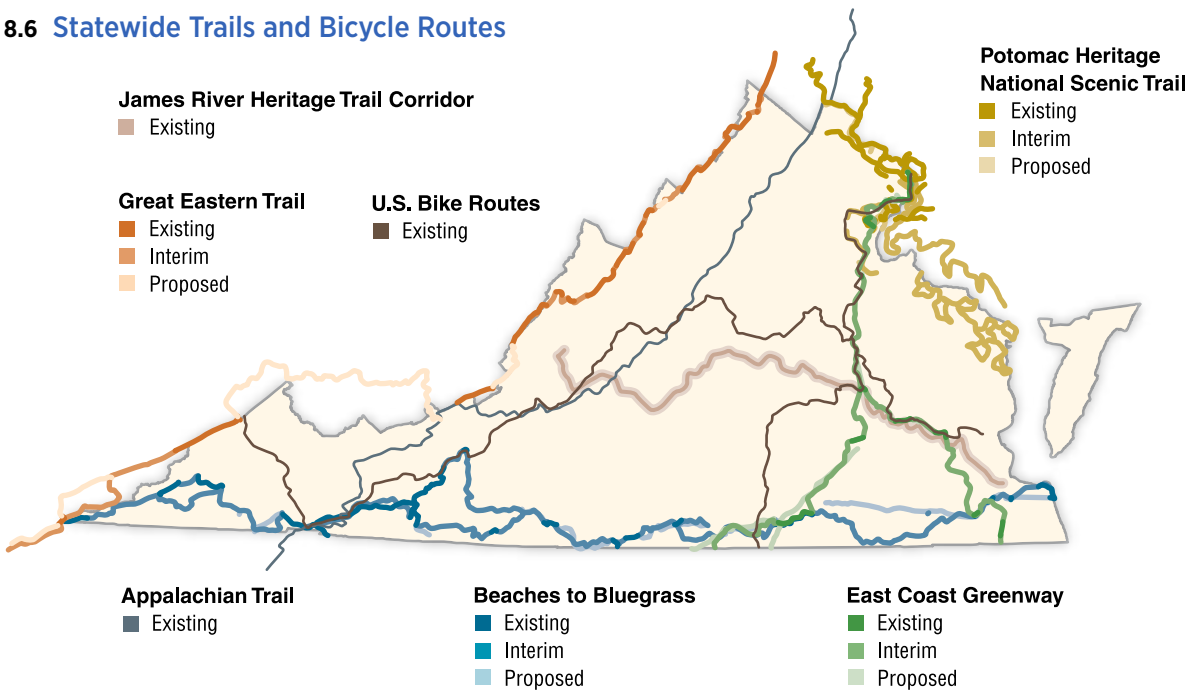
### Assets and Opportunities

#### Statewide Connecting Trails

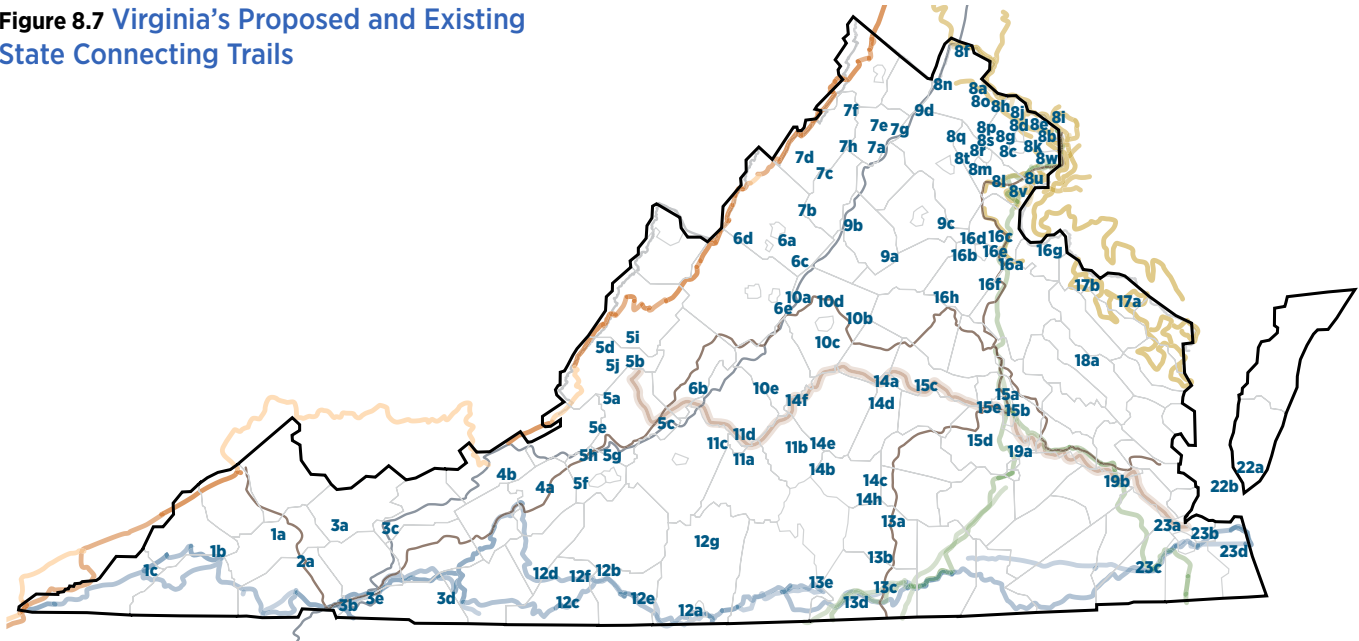
In 2007, the Virginia Outdoors Plan first mapped the six statewide trails that make up the state trail system. This state system of scenic, recreation and connecting trails is described in Virginia § 10.1-204. Although mapping the statewide trails was a significant step toward the goal of connecting the Commonwealth, some areas of the state were still not connected.

The STAC requested that additional work be completed on the statewide network. The committee developed goals to fill gaps in the statewide trails system and to encourage its inclusion in local and regional plans.

Figure 8.6 Statewide Trails and Bicycle Routes



**Figure 8.7 Virginia's Proposed and Existing State Connecting Trails**



- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>1a</b> Clinch River Trail                          | <b>8e</b> Custis Trail                                    | <b>13a</b> Tobacco Heritage -High Bridge Connector                     |
| <b>1b</b> Guest River Gorge Trail                     | <b>8f</b> Hill, Hops and Vine Bike Route                  | <b>13b</b> Tobacco Heritage Road Routes                                |
| <b>1c</b> Wallen Ridge Trail                          | <b>8g</b> I-66 Bikeway                                    | <b>13c</b> Tobacco Heritage Future Off-road Trails                     |
| <b>2a</b> Clinch Mtn/Channels/Hidden Valley Connector | <b>8h</b> Northern Broad Run                              | <b>13d</b> Occoneechee State Park Trails                               |
| <b>2b</b> Cranesnest Equestrian Trail                 | <b>8i</b> Pentagon Memorial Circuit Trail (911 Trail)     | <b>13e</b> Staunton River State Park Trails                            |
| <b>3a</b> Heart of Appalachia Bike Route              | <b>8j</b> Pimmit Run Stream Valley Trail                  | <b>14a</b> Willis River Trail/Cumberland State Forest Roads and Trails |
| <b>3b</b> Virginia Creeper Trail (part)               | <b>8k</b> Pohick Stream Valley Trail                      | <b>14b</b> High Bridge Trail   |
| <b>3c</b> Walker Mountain Trail                       | <b>8l</b> Route 234 Bicycle and Running Trail             | <b>14c</b> Prince Edward State Forest Roads and Trails                 |
| <b>3d</b> Matthews State Forest Roads and Trails      | <b>8m</b> Southern Broad Run                              | <b>14d</b> Bear Creek Lake State Park Trails                           |
| <b>3e</b> Grayson Highlands State Park Trails         | <b>8n</b> W&OD Connector                                  | <b>14e</b> Holliday Lake State Park Trails                             |
| <b>4a</b> Valley to Valley Trail                      | <b>8o</b> W&OD Trail                                      | <b>14f</b> James River State Park Trails                               |
| <b>4b</b> Poverty Creek/Huckleberry Connector         | <b>8p</b> West County Trail                               | <b>14h</b> Twin Lakes State Park Trails                                |
| <b>5a</b> Craig Valley Scenic Trail                   | <b>8q</b> Mill to Mill Trail                              | <b>15a</b> Gillie's Creek Greenway                                     |
| <b>5b</b> Fore Mountain Trail                         | <b>8r</b> Catharpin Greenway                              | <b>15b</b> Cannon Creek Greenway                                       |
| <b>5c</b> Glenwood Horse Trail                        | <b>8s</b> Manassas Bridle Trails                          | <b>15c</b> Powhatan State Park Trails                                  |
| <b>5d</b> Jackson River Trail                         | <b>8t</b> Conway-Robinson State Forest Roads and Trails   | <b>15d</b> Pocahontas State Park Trails                                |
| <b>5e</b> North Price/Broad Mountain Trails           | <b>8u</b> Mason Neck State Park Trails                    | <b>15e</b> James River Park Trail System                               |
| <b>5f</b> Roanoke River Greenway Network              | <b>8v</b> Leesylvania State Park Trails                   | <b>16a</b> Dahlgren Connector  |
| <b>5g</b> Tinker Creek Greenway                       | <b>8w</b> Capital Trail Coalition trail network           | <b>16b</b> Virginia Central Rail Trail                                 |
| <b>5h</b> Carvin's Cove Trails                        | <b>9a</b> Rapidan River Trail                             | <b>16c</b> Canal Path  |
| <b>5i</b> Douthat State Park Trails                   | <b>9b</b> Rapidan horse/hiking trail                      | <b>16d</b> Fall Hill Avenue Trail                                      |
| <b>5j</b> Dry Run Trail                               | <b>9c</b> Rappahannock River Trail                        | <b>16e</b> Rappahannock River Heritage Trail                           |
| <b>6a</b> Bike the Valley Bike Route                  | <b>9c</b> Sky Meadows State Park Trail                    | <b>16f</b> Spotsylvania Greenways                                      |
| <b>6b</b> Chessie/Brushy/Buena Vista Connector        | <b>10a</b> Crozet Tunnel Trail                            | <b>16g</b> Lake Anna State Park Trails                                 |
| <b>6c</b> Madison Run horse/hiking trail              | <b>10b</b> Rivanna River Trail                            | <b>16h</b> Caledon State Park Trails                                   |
| <b>6d</b> Wild Oak NRT                                | <b>10c</b> Route 20 Sidepath                              | <b>17a</b> Northern Neck Heritage Bike Route                           |
| <b>6e</b> South River Greenway                        | <b>10d</b> Three-Notched Trail                            | <b>17b</b> Westmoreland State Park Trails                              |
| <b>7a</b> Dickey Ridge Trail                          | <b>10e</b> Route 29 sidepath                              | <b>18a</b> Middle Peninsula Bike Route                                 |
| <b>7b</b> Massanuttan Mountain South                  | <b>11a</b> James River Heritage/Poplar Forest Connector   | <b>19a</b> Appomattox River Trail                                      |
| <b>7c</b> Massanuttan Mountain Trail                  | <b>11b</b> Appomattox Heritage/State Forest Connector     | <b>19b</b> Chippokes Plantation State Park Trails                      |
| <b>7d</b> Shenandoah Town and County Rail Trail       | <b>11c</b> Lynchburg Trail System and Riverside extension | <b>22a</b> Southern Tip Bike & Hike Trail                              |
| <b>7e</b> Royal Shenandoah Greenway                   | <b>11d</b> Lynchburg Bike Loops                           | <b>22b</b> Kiptopeke State Park Trails                                 |
| <b>7f</b> Tuscarora Trail                             | <b>12a</b> Angler's Ridge Trail System                    | <b>23a</b> Birthplace of America Trail                                 |
| <b>7g</b> Route 522 pedestrian path                   | <b>12b</b> Philpott Reservoir Trails                      | <b>23b</b> Elizabeth River Trail                                       |
| <b>7h</b> Shendandoah State Park Trails               | <b>12c</b> Mayo River/Dehart Trail System                 | <b>23c</b> Dismal Swamp Trails   |
| <b>8a</b> Goose Creek Trail                           | <b>12d</b> Rocky Knob/Rock Castle Gorge                   | <b>23d</b> First Landing State Park Trails                             |
| <b>8b</b> Alexandria Heritage Trail                   | <b>12e</b> Smith River Sports Complex Connector           |  |
| <b>8c</b> Bull Run-Occoquan Trail                     | <b>12f</b> Fairy Stone State Park Trails                  |  |
| <b>8d</b> Cross County Trail                          | <b>12g</b> Route 29 bike route                            |  |

To that end, DCR developed a Proposed and Existing State Connecting Trails map (see figure 8.7). Connecting trails were added to this map based on advisory committee recommendations, a region’s featured projects, a review of historic Virginia Outdoor Plan (VOP) trail maps and an effort to reach into every planning district. Water trails are not included. To be included on the map, trails had to meet all of these criteria:

- Be at least 5 miles long (one way).
- Connect to a statewide trail directly or through another connecting trail.
- Cross barriers, boundaries or jurisdictions to connect communities or natural assets.
- Have an established management entity.
- Be identified in local, regional or state plans and have grassroots support.

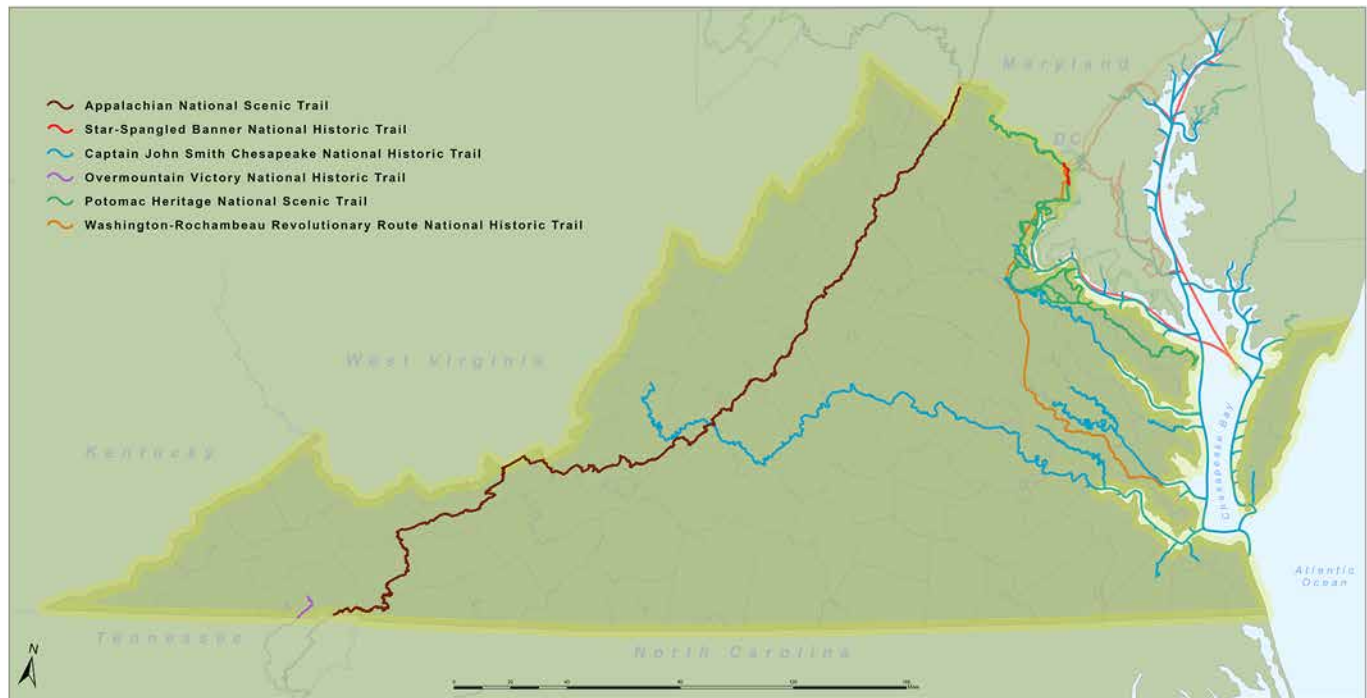
While the effort to make trail connections is ongoing, this map may help plan for future connections across regional boundaries.







### National Trails

2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act “to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the nation.” Virginia has six **National Trails** that offer outdoor recreation, transportation, education, enhance quality of life, economic development and heritage tourism to nearby communities.

Two national scenic trails, the Appalachian Trail and the Potomac Heritage Trail, are also scenic trails within the state trail system that meet the Code of Virginia’s non-motorized requirement, and the latter employs different modes of travel. The John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail encompasses both land and water trail systems along Chesapeake Bay rivers and tributaries. Supporters of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail, which follows the old Kings Highway through eastern Virginia, are preparing for the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War. The Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail and the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail have small but significant footprints in opposite corners of the state.

**Figure 8.8 National Scenic and Historic Trails in Virginia**



 <p><b>Appalachian National Scenic Trail</b> About 2,150 miles of this scenic trail follow the Appalachian Mountains from Katahdin, Maine, through New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina, to Springer Mountain, Georgia. The trail is one of the two initial components of the National Trails System. It is also a unit of the National Park System.</p>	 <p><b>Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail</b> This route follows the path of a band of Revolutionary War patriots who mustered in western Virginia and eastern Tennessee and came across the mountains of North Carolina to Kings Mountain in South Carolina. There they defeated British-led militia in 1780, helping turn the tide for eventual American victory in the war.</p>	 <p><b>Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail</b> This five-pronged set of land and water trails commemorates the movements of British and American forces in the Chesapeake Bay region during the War of 1812. In the summer of 1814, British naval forces occupied the Chesapeake Bay, burned public buildings in Washington, D.C., occupied Alexandria, Virginia, and laid siege to Fort Mifflin in Baltimore, Maryland. During that unsuccessful siege, Francis Scott Key wrote the poem that became the U.S. national anthem.</p>
 <p><b>Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail</b> This historic trail commemorates the exploratory voyages in 1607-1609 of Captain Smith, interprets the historic and contemporary lifeways of American Indians, and explores the watershed’s natural history. Connecting dozens of gateway communities and hundreds of parks, museums, and public access sites, the trail provides land and water-based learning and recreation opportunities along the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.</p>	 <p><b>Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail</b> Between the mouth of the Potomac River and the Allegheny Highlands, this evolving Trail network provides access to the beauty and heritage of the Potomac and Youghiohony river corridors. The network includes the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, Chesapeake &amp; Ohio Canal Towpath and part of the Great Allegheny Passage, various named Potomac Heritage Trail segments, Mount Vernon Trail, bicycling routes on the Northern Neck of Virginia and in southern Maryland, and many parks, historic sites and natural areas.</p>	 <p><b>Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail</b> The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route commemorates the land and water routes used by the allied forces of the American and French armies and navies leading to the 1781 British surrender at Yorktown, Virginia, and their victorious return north to Boston. The network of land and water routes traverses nine states and the District of Columbia.</p>

Author: Peter Bonsall - National Park Service

Working through memoranda of understanding and cooperative agreements and task agreements, trail partners in Virginia contribute to and reflect the character of the National Trails System. Many partners, often aided by volunteers, have planned, designed, constructed and maintained trail sections; identified scenic resources; developed trip itineraries; and promoted and led tours.

**Case Study**

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission has developed an interactive map based on a corridor analysis of the Potomac Heritage Trail through the region. This helpful tool provides information on the status of each trail segment and helps local planners close the gaps. <https://nvr.com/maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=d1757e45167d4f9c41fcc88193e4f7>

**Opening Private Lands to Recreation**

Where landowner concerns create gaps in trail networks, some outfitters have been successful in negotiating access to private property through guided overnight trips. In these cases, the outfitter holds liability insurance and charges a camping fee that provides income for the landowner. The outfitter is responsible for clearing up any trash and ensuring that property damage does not occur. This arrangement has provided extra income to farmers along the James River Heritage Trail.

The Southwest Regional Recreation Authority/Spearhead Trails has added hundreds of miles of trail to the Spearhead Trails system,

which is currently at 400 miles and growing at over 100 miles per year. Most of the trails are on private properties based on land-use agreements with large private landowners—primarily coal, gas and timber companies. These landowners appreciate knowing their lands are policed by Spearhead rangers, and that the recreation authority holds liability insurance in case of injuries. Also because they donate the easement or land-use agreements to Spearhead Trails, they are protected from lawsuits by trail riders. The authority covers insurance and other costs through a permit system. Written agreements with each landowner provide flexibility in trail alignment in case acreage is put back into production, making otherwise unusable land a gateway to outdoor recreation.

The area is currently experiencing around \$15 million per year in economic impact and supporting about 168 full-time jobs, primarily in the private businesses that now cater to Spearhead Trails users. Spearhead Trails not only builds and maintains environmentally friendly ATV trails, but it helps build trail economies for local towns and communities. Next year, it will open its first equestrian trails and hopes to create horse towns and economies in the near future.

**State code** offers protection to landowners who open their lands for recreation without a fee. In the recreational use statute, a public entity is required by statute to “hold harmless” and indemnify the landowner for the cost associated with a claim brought by an injured recreational user if the public entity has an easement or license for the use of the land by the public.

Prince William County has been actively closing the gaps through Potomac Heritage Trail segments at George Mason’s Potomac Science Center, Locust Shade Park and the Neabsco Creek Boardwalk, a destination walkway through wetlands that connects residential communities to Leesylvania State Park.



*Potomac Heritage Trail connecting to GMU Science Center  
Prince William County Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism*



*Locust Shade Park segment  
Prince William County  
Department of Parks,  
Recreation and Tourism*



*Neabsco Creek Boardwalk  
Prince William County Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism*

### Case Study

#### Partnerships with Health Providers

Many parks and recreation agencies are exploring partnerships with health providers to increase physical activity within their communities.

The city of Hopewell joined the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities & Town's Campaign through the leadership of the Community Action Network, an initiative formed by the Virginia Department of Health's Crater Health District. In October 2017, the HEAL Campaign awarded Hopewell gold-level recognition for accomplishing its resolution goals in each of three priority areas:

1. Promoting physical activity through improvements in the physical environment.
2. Promoting access to healthy food in under resourced areas.
3. Increasing physical activity opportunities throughout the city. The goals were accomplished through city-wide programs and activities to get Hopewell residents eating better and moving more. This included a park renovation project to highlight the city's outdoor amenities and

redesign the waterfront area along the Appomattox River Trail. Through this initiative, the city has moved forward with additional park renovation projects to improve existing parks and increase use.

Efforts to increase healthy food access were spurred through a partnership with a Hopewell Girl Scout Troop. Along with the troop's help, the city established a community garden that donates fresh food to the Hopewell Food Pantry. Another Hopewell partner, the Fitness Warriors program, is working to increase opportunities for residents to be physically active. The program offers free fitness instructor training programs to the community with the understanding that instructors will adopt a "pay it forward" approach by offering their own free classes in under resourced areas in the community. These initiatives highlight Hopewell's HEAL program's successful community involvement, partnerships, and interdepartmental approach, which are essential ingredients to advancing the health and wellbeing of any community.

More information on Hopewell's HEAL initiative can be accessed through the Public Health Advocates' HEAL Cities Campaign webinar: "How HEAL Cities Are Advancing Health for All in Parks and Recreation."

### Recommendations

Advocacy is essential in developing a statewide trails network. The STAC met annually, since its founding in 2015, to provide input for the 2018 VOP and annual reports to the General Assembly. Goals and objectives developed during these meetings are listed below, each with an agency or partnering organization identified for implementation. The STAC, along with staff from DCR, will track implementation.

- Develop strategies to enhance trails in communities and close the gaps in the statewide system of trails as described in §10.1-204.
  - Complete a statewide trails plan to summarize the work of STAC and guide trails development and priorities for grant awards. (DCR, STAC)
  - Develop multi-state trails connectivity goals and strategies in the statewide trails plan. (DCR, STAC)
  - Encourage partnerships through Virginia Economic Development Partnership and local economic development initiatives for trails development. Assist local communities to promote trails as economic initiatives. (Virginia Tourism Corp.)
  - Identify and close the gaps in the statewide trails system and create linkages between communities and open space. Gather data from trail counters to support trails projects. (Regions, localities with the Department of Transportation [VDOT], DCR and Virginia Tourism Corp.)
- Create a central clearinghouse of information to close statewide trail system gaps. Consider an interagency memorandum of understanding to facilitate information sharing. (DCR )
- Include recreation, scenic and connecting statewide trails in local and regional plans. (Local and regional governments)
- Obtain funds for a statewide trails needs assessment showing costs for system development. (DCR, STAC, advocacy community)
- Identify existing and potential old-growth forests in each region that tie into the statewide trail system. (STAC)
- Address maintenance and operations needs at the outset of trail development. (Federal, state and local agencies)
- Connect local and regional trail providers with health partners. (STAC, DCR, Virginia Department of Health, local health partners)





Old Rag Mountain, Shenandoah National Park | Nate Dennison/Virginia Tourism Corp.

### Return on Investment – James River Park System

With more than 1.4 million visits in 2016 alone, the James River Park System is by far the most visited park system in the Richmond region. The results of an economic impact study confirmed that the James River Park System is extremely important not only to the social and health status of the Richmond region, but also to the economic status of the region. Some of the highlights of the study:

Based on the 2017 budget, every James River Park System budget dollar is related to \$60.26 in visitor spending

In interviews with local businesses, owners estimated a 32.7 percent loss in revenue if the James River Park System did not exist.

For every quarter-mile closer to the James River Park System a single family property is, the property's assessed value increased by a total of \$8,963.10

- Develop creative public and private funding strategies and partnerships to leverage resources for funding trail development
  - Seek sources of funding for trail renovation and maintenance. (STAC, DCR, advocacy community)
  - Leverage funding for trails with other infrastructure. (Government agencies and business partners)
  - Educate localities about transportation funding for trails. (VDOT, DCR)
- Facilitate partnership and outreach with business and the private sector to enhance and build trails. (STAC or friends of trails)
- Foster programs for recognizing businesses that support trails. (DCR)
- Develop strategies for the state to encourage trail agreements through partnerships, programs and legislation. (DCR, STAC)
- Explore utility easements for trail connections. (DCR, planning districts and localities)
- Work with businesses to explore trail development through mitigation when impacts to resources are unavoidable. (Local and state agencies and land managers)
- Integrate approaches to promote and market trail values and benefits.
  - Obtain funding for a statewide study on the economic and other benefits of trails. (STAC)
  - Publicize and market trail-use data and other positive impacts. (DCR, Virginia Tourism Corp., local and regional trail leaders, Virginia Health Department)
- Foster communication and networking among trail stakeholders.
  - Develop a common vision for trails in Virginia. (STAC)
  - Develop a communications plan. (DCR, Virginia Tourism Corp., STAC)

- Expand distribution of Greenways and Trails e-news. (DCR )
- Establish a nonprofit statewide trails organization. (Friends of trails, STAC)
- Create a central place for trail stakeholders to share and learn, incorporating social media. (Advocacy community and statewide trails organization)
- Provide educational opportunities, e.g., trails workshops. (Regions and local governments with support from DCR and other state agencies)
- Increase tourism and commercial activities associated with statewide trail system.
  - Develop tourism branding for trails in Virginia. (Virginia Tourism Corp.)
  - Develop community strategies to sustain and expand trails and supporting businesses. (Statewide trails organizations, Virginia Tourism Corp., local governments and chambers of commerce)
  - Identify trail service gaps in regions and localities that could support new and expanding businesses. (Local governments, chambers, Virginia Tourism Corp., Virginia Economic Development Partnership with input from trails advocacy community)
  - Install trail counters and collect other data needed to identify business opportunities. (Local and regional governments, VDOT)
  - Develop an app for sharing trail data with users. (VDOT, DCR, Economic Development and Virginia Tourism Corp.)
  - Plan and conduct training to promote trail towns. Develop a “train the trainer” program for an annual greenway and land conservation conference to include towns along Virginia state trails and parks, Appalachian Trail, Tobacco Heritage Trail and Spearhead Trail communities. (DCR, public and private partners)
- Update the Greenways and Trails Toolbox and Trails Program webpage to provide practices, standards, statutes and guidelines that enhance the effectiveness of trail planning across the Commonwealth.
  - Update the Greenways and Trails Toolbox to include a trail signage plan; OHV trail development guidelines; strategies for overcoming barriers like highways, railroads and waterways; defining the corridor to reduce trespass; and best management practices for meeting stormwater standards. (DCR)
  - Provide planners with resources needed to engage property owners. (DCR)

## Resources

- The Greenways and Trails Toolbox, located on the DCR website, is a helpful resource for trail development.
- Active Living Research <https://www.activelivingresearch.org/taxonomy/parks-recreation>
- American Trails <http://www.americantrails.org/ee/>
- Outdoor Industry Association Research and Tools <https://outdoorindustry.org/research-tools/>
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/>
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy <https://www.railstotrails.org/>
- Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals technical resources <https://www.recpro.org/technical-resources>

## Works Cited

1. Shivy, Victoria A. and Suen, I-Shian, “Economic Impact of the James River Park System,” Virginia Commonwealth University, April 2017, [www.jamesriverpark.org/documents/JRPS-Economic-Impact-Study-4-17.pdf](http://www.jamesriverpark.org/documents/JRPS-Economic-Impact-Study-4-17.pdf)



Family hike on the Appalachian Trail | Jennifer Wampler/Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation