



# Rivers & Trails Recreational Use Plan

Martinsville/Henry County, Virginia



# Martinsville-Henry County Rivers and Trails Recreational Use Plan

Martinsville – Henry County, Virginia  
2019

## Prepared by

The Dan River Basin Association  
In partnership with Henry County and the  
City of Martinsville.

## Funding provided by

The Harvest Foundation



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The Outdoor Recreational Use Master Plan is a citizen-envisioned roadmap for a network of trails and river access points on the Smith River that connect people, places and events in our region. This plan continues the work of expanding and improving the outdoor recreational opportunity spectrum that will make the community a more desirable place to live, promote tourism, provide economic opportunities to attract businesses and protect the natural environment and local cultural heritage in Martinsville and Henry County, VA.

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# Introduction to the Master Plan



Master plans are tangible and often visible statements of how a community values its natural resources now, what it wants to do to protect them in the future, and what is required to get there. Think of the Master Plan as a “green road map” of proposed trails and river access points connecting the natural, cultural, historical and heritage amenities of the area. Potential connections to cross-border regional trails, parks and routes and an inventory of what outdoor recreational assets already exist in the area are also important components of a master plan. When developing a master plan, a mix of careful analysis of the existing conditions and environment, meaningful public engagement and visionary, but practical, planning with financially feasible implementation is critical.

While processes for developing them vary, master plans are most successful when they represent a vision that brings together the ideas of multiple and diverse groups. Effective master plans are flexible and involve the community and other stakeholders from the outset, giving the plan a legitimate base, and a better chance to come to fruition. In addition, master planning for outdoor recreation can be an excellent tool to encourage citizens to actively participate in natural resource protection, conservation and preservation.

This Rivers & Trails Recreational Use Master Plan contains proposed trails and river access points recommended through public input and municipality participation combined with an evaluation of Martinsville and Henry County’s natural assets, waterways, cultural resources, and rich history. This Plan contains an inventory of current assets, regional planning efforts that can have an impact on local planning and recommendations for marketing and implementation.

The planning, funding and construction of the trails and river access points is a long-term, phased endeavor, with results emerging over the course of many years as opportunities for implementation of new outdoor recreational assets arise over time.

## **The Need for a Master Plan**

The Master Plan provides direction in the implementation and promotion of the area’s distinct natural and historic features. The plan can attract tourism to the region and provide additional opportunities for employment and commerce. The Master plan can also be utilized in the acquisition of funding for project implementation and community development.

The needs can be organized into four sustainability goals:

- Economic sustainability
- Environmental sustainability
- Physical sustainability
- Social sustainability

## **The Purpose of a Master Plan**

A number of towns, cities, counties and states seek to provide 10 acres of park and recreation area per 1,000 residents to provide a better quality of life for citizens. This is important, but the purpose of a Master Plan is multi-faceted, and can address multiple needs:

- Assist in boosting the economy
- Help reduce health issues such as diabetes and obesity
- Provide consensus on land use
- Engage citizens to protect and preserve natural resources
- Attract tourists and business to the region
- Spur community partnerships and collaborative efforts

An approved Master Plan can also allow various groups and agencies to pursue funding for more detailed planning and/or trail development. Competition for state and federal funding is increasing, and funding requests continually outpace the amount of available funds. An approved Master Plan can be an important factor in successfully acquiring support for construction of projects and future planning.

### **Vision of the Master Plan**

When offered a remarkable experience in the outdoors, people will travel long distances and residents will stay in this area to immerse themselves in its unique natural assets.

### **Overall Goals of the Master Plan**

- To provide physical, educational and social facilities in the form of trails and river access points as places for communities to recreate
- To create economic development via tourism and associated affiliations while preserving corridors for nature and nature exploration

#### **Economic Goals**

- Attraction of new business
- Retention of current business
- Attraction of tourists

#### **Environmental Goals**

- Protection of waterways
- Preservation of green space
- Improved habitat

#### **Health Goals**

- Improved community health
- Perceived mental health
- Increase citizen active lifestyle

### **Objectives of the Master Plan**

- Serve the community's recreational and alternative transportation needs, to foster healthy lifestyles and to promote outdoor assets
- Provide an inventory of the existing outdoor recreational assets
- Provide new opportunities for development of outdoor recreational assets
- Provide residents and visitors a strong quality of life which will help attract new businesses and people to our area
- Provide options for recreation and transportation

### **Long-Term Outcomes for a Master Plan include:**

- Sustainable economic growth through the promotion of nature and outdoor recreation
- Improved community health, including a reduction in obesity and diabetes
- Increased quality of life, including the provision of sought-after recreational amenities
- Preservation of Martinsville and Henry County's natural resources
- Recreation and educational programs for children and adults that encourage the widespread use of trails to be enjoyed by every sector of the community

# Local Planning History & Regional Planning Efforts



## Brief History of Local Planning

In 2004, the Harvest Foundation funded an initiative directed by the Southern Environmental Law Center to develop a working group, the Martinsville-Henry County Rivers and Trails Group (MHCRTG), responsible for developing ideas for infrastructure contributing to quality of life for the community and aiding in attracting visitors and new business to the area. Six months later, MHCRTG became an affiliate of the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA), which has contributed to support the goals of the initial group and strengthen partnerships with Henry County and the City of Martinsville.

DRBA and the Martinsville-Henry County Rivers and Trails Group played a crucial role in the success of the initial Rivers and Trails Master Plan approved in 2009, and continued to develop partnerships with municipal and state organizations. The implementation of the development of walking, hiking, biking, and paddling trails proposed in the 2009 Master Plan was successful. The Smith River Trail system was developed and incorporates greenways, blueways, urban routes, bike routes and river access locations.

Through collaboration among Henry County, the City of Martinsville, DRBA and many other partners, the trails, river access locations and preserves were branded with the Smith River as the focal point. The river offered a ready-made water trail, and the addition of access points allowed the community to realize the potential of economic development through outdoor recreation. The first trail was built in Fieldale through a partnership with Henry County and funded by the Dominion Foundation. The construction of three new river access locations (Fieldale, Bassett and Marrowbone Creek), along with construction of the first section of trail in Fieldale, helped spur the growth of outdoor infrastructure in region.

As other trails were developed, DRBA continued working with the County and City on design elements and recognizable branding and marketing. When driving through Henry County and the City of Martinsville, local citizens and visitors can easily identify outdoor recreational opportunities through markers, kiosks and trailhead/river access signage. In 2017, over 18 miles of trails and 11 river access points existed in the City of Martinsville and Henry County.



Outdoor recreational tourism as an economic driver became a focus in the area, spurring river guides, trail maps and an outfitting business. No longer was the region only known for the Martinsville Speedway. World-class trout fishing, paddling, hiking, nature photography and birding began to bring people to the area. The increase in outdoor recreational assets also created the need to increase environmental education, stewardship activities and water quality monitoring programs. DRBA and other partners launched programs to provide these services to the community, and this work continues today.

### The Danville Riverwalk, VA

Only a 30-minute drive from Martinsville, the Danville River Walk may define the City of Danville for the 21st century. With the ability to lure outdoor recreation enthusiasts, the Riverwalk attracts visitors from both NC and VA. There is an opportunity to connect the Smith River Trail System in MHC to the Riverwalk via the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.



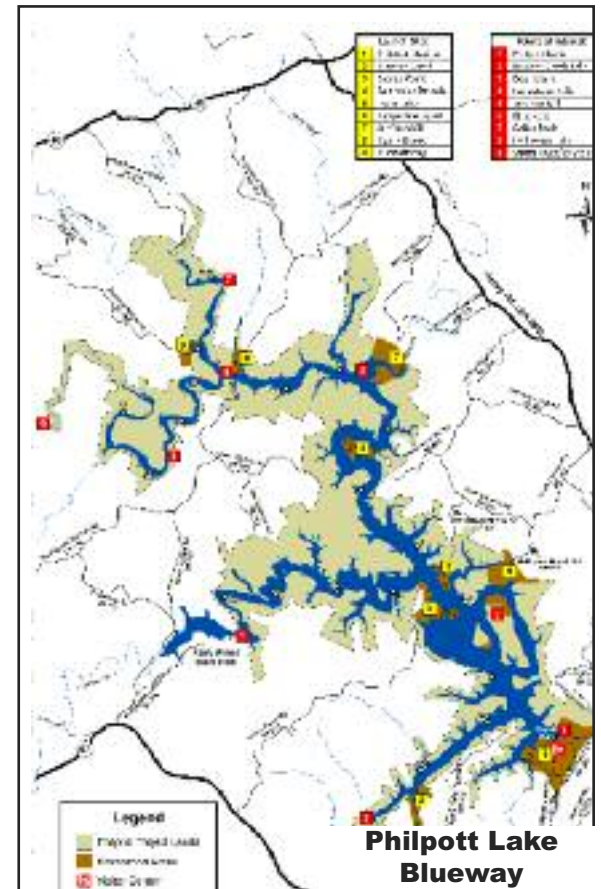
### Rockingham County Pathways

Rockingham County, NC is just 10 minutes from Martinsville and on the state border in Ridgeway. Pathways is a long-range plan to create recreational trails throughout the County. Since its approval by Rockingham County Commissioners in 2013, it has been the roadmap for building over 15 miles of walking and mountain biking trails, with almost eight more miles of trails planned in the next four years. There are opportunities to promote the Smith River Trail System and river accesses to hikers and boaters visiting Rockingham County.

The newest addition to the NC Pathways Plan is the Haw River Trail & River Access. The Haw River Trail is a 70-mile multi-use trail following the path of the Haw River from Haw River State Park to Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. For over half of that stretch, the Haw River Trail combines with the statewide Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Martinsville and Henry County are less than an hour's drive from the Haw River, providing opportunities to promote the Smith River Trail System to visitors.

### Philpott Lake Blueway, VA

Created through a partnership between administration and tourism in Henry, Franklin and Patrick counties, the US Army Corps of Engineers at Philpott Lake and the Dan River Basin Association, the Philpott Lake Blueway is a series of water trails easily accessible from surrounding parks, boat launches and campgrounds. With breathtaking views, historical landmarks and abundant wildlife in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, the Blueway explores points of interest stretching over 25 miles of the lake. The individual water trails range from 1.5 miles to 9 miles in length. Philpott Lake is just a short drive from the Blue Ridge Parkway, which receives hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.



### SoVA Wild Blueway, VA & NC

The SoVA Wild Blueway was developed through partnerships between tourism and municipalities, with support from the Dan River Basin Association. The SVWB consists of four rivers and two lakes spanning Halifax and Mecklenburg counties, connecting over 100 miles of navigable water and 1,200 miles of shoreline. Interest in kayaking/canoeing has grown significantly in the region since the launch of the SVWB and is being enjoyed by both motorized boat users and paddle sport water craft enthusiasts for fishing, wildlife viewing and related outdoor activities.





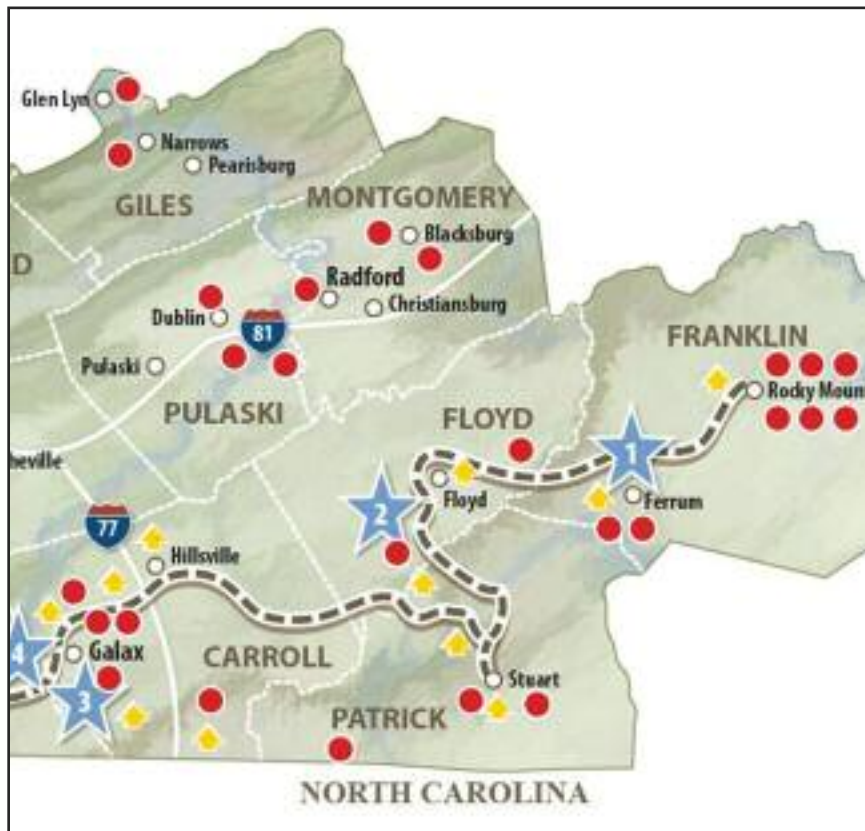
### **The Crooked Road Trail, VA**

The Crooked Road is a 330-mile driving trail through the mountains of Southwest Virginia that connects nine major music venues and over 60 affiliated venues and festivals in Virginia.

The Crooked Road was founded in 2004 with the mission to support economic development in Southwest Virginia by promoting the region's rich heritage of traditional music. The Crooked Road Trail now includes nineteen counties, four cities, over 50 towns, five regional planning districts, two tourism organizations, and a large number of music venues.

The Commonwealth of Virginia named The Crooked Road as Virginia's Heritage Music Trail. Although the Trail is focused on the uniqueness and vitality of this region's heritage music, it also includes outdoor recreational activities, museums, crafts, and historic and cultural programs.

Although the Crooked Road Trail does not currently include Martinsville and Henry County, through promotion and wayfinding, local music and cultural venues can attract visitors who are traveling the Trail.



### **Cross-State Trail Systems**

In both Virginia and North Carolina, major trails, river access points, blueway and greenway efforts are underway to link communities and counties from one end of the state to the other. In North Carolina, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail will link Clingman's Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains to Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks. The Virginia Beaches to Bluegrass Trail is a proposed statewide trail that will eventually stretch west to east from the Cumberland Plateau to the Chesapeake Bay. Each of these major trail systems will have significant impact in Martinsville and Henry County.

### **Mountains-to-Sea Trail, NC**

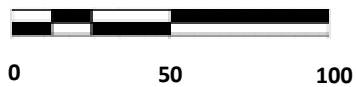
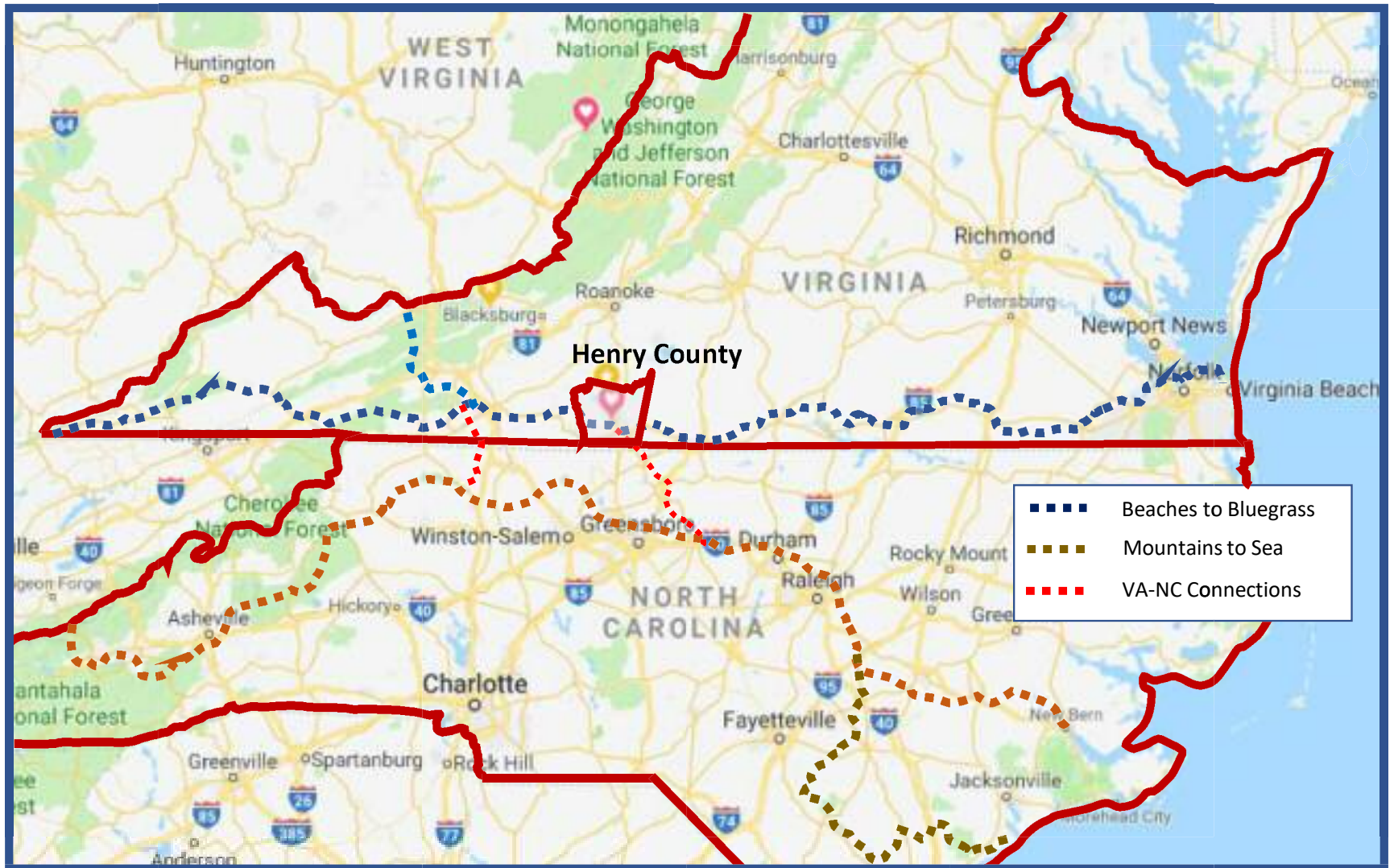
North Carolina's longest trail, the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail, is an ambitious project to provide a foot path linking the Mountains in the West to the Coastal Plain in the East. The trail, when completed, will be over 900 miles in length. Starting at Clingman's Dome (the highest point in Tennessee and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park), this trail boasts many superlatives. It travels over Mount Mitchell (the highest mountain in the entire Appalachian chain), and through Jockey's Ridge State Park (the highest sand dune on the East Coast). It's also the longest trail in the State, and one of the longest in the Appalachian region.

Today, more than 500 miles of footpath are built, with temporary connectors on back roads and state bike routes. The footpath is nearly complete in the western part of the state - the mountains - and includes many sections that make for excellent day hikes. It stretches unbroken from near Maggie Valley, NC all the way to Stone Mountain State Park north of Wilkesboro. Only a short stretch near the Smoky Mountains has yet to be routed. For now, only sections of foot path are completed farther east, and these footpath sections are linked with roads and state bicycle routes to form the entire route. People can now hike across the state.

Of regional significance to Martinsville and Henry County is the routing of a spur for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail that is planned to pass through Rockingham and Guilford counties. This spur is a short distance from the state line in Ridgeway, VA.

### **Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, VA**

This proposed statewide shared-use path and multi-use trail is intended to connect communities between the Virginia Beach oceanfront and Cumberland Gap. It will provide southern Virginia residents and visitors with increased opportunities to walk, bike and ride horseback. The Trail will eventually stretch west to east from the Cumberland Plateau to the Chesapeake Bay. Comprising of many trails existing or underway, this network will connect the mountains to the sea and is envisioned to stimulate ecotourism across rural Southern Virginia. Access to the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail could occur in Stanleytown and Martinsville.



## Regional Connections Virginia and North Carolina

Beaches to Bluegrass - Mountains to Sea



## MHC Urban Trail Route Project

The purpose of Urban Trails is to provide increased mobility for people with health concerns as an alternate form of exercise and transportation.

These urban trail routes are essential for creating a healthy city. There is much to be said for neighborhoods that are physically connected, and where it is possible to move across a city easily for people with all abilities. An effective urban trail system delivers substantial health benefits, helps to entice residents outside, and is recognized as a key positive attribute of quality of life. It can also provide important ecological connections and movement corridors for many other species with which we share urban spaces.

Urban Trail routes in Henry County were developed by DRBA in partnership with the Coalition for Health and Wellness through the "Get Started! Path to a Better Life" project. This project identified one-mile urban-rural trail routes in locations across the county and provided signage and brochures with descriptions, maps and information on walking as part of a healthy lifestyle. These non-traditional trails included sidewalks, wider roadways with reduced traffic, housing developments, corporate property, parks and existing trails that are open to the public or have a joint use agreement. A special emphasis was placed on identifying points of interest along the trail such as a farmer's market, health food store or exercise opportunity.

It is important to explore the many potential ways that humans can move across a city because it emphasizes on how the many other species that share city spaces with people move around as well. The notion of the city as a complete habitat understands that there are many biological routes followed by both humans and non-humans, such as fish, bird migration routes, micro-movements of insects, amphibians and small mammals crossing streets and sharing urban spaces. This can assist with protection of all things living in a space.

*Patrick Henry Community College*



*Ridgeway, VA*



*Collinsville, VA*



*Fayette Area, Martinsville*



*Askin Street Area, Martinsville*



*Fieldale, VA*



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# Current Inventory of Local Recreational Assets



Many of the projects in this plan are extensions or reworking of existing trails and river access locations. The following is an inventory of the current trails and river access points in Martinsville and Henry County. This inventory works in conjunction with the proposed projects and will make connections that will extend the Smith River Trail System and create a county-wide system that is more attractive to economic development, both locally and regionally.

## Henry County Parks and Recreation

Collaboration between Henry County Parks and Recreation and DRBA has been the primary driver in trail and river access development in MHC. In 2004, Henry County had a total of twelve facilities that were maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation for public use. These facilities include six developed parks, additional ball fields leased from clubs, and ball fields leased from different school facilities. Collaboration between DRBA and Henry County has resulted in over 18 miles of trails, 11 river access locations, two nature preserves and additional facilities and infrastructure to support a wide variety of outdoor recreation in MHC. The department's future plans include providing for the continued maintenance of these facilities, the improvement of certain park features, and the acquisition of additional equipment to accomplish these maintenance and improvement goals.

## City of Martinsville Parks and Recreation

The City of Martinsville operates a dozen city parks offering a wide variety of activities and outdoor amenities. The City of Martinsville has also partnered with DRBA in the construction of the Uptown Spur Trail and the Silver Bell Trail and continues to partner with Henry County for the maintenance and additional construction of the Dick and Willie Rail Trail Passage that connects with Uptown Martinsville. The Uptown Connection Trail was the first paved, multiuse trail to serve city residents and work continues to make connections that bridge the gap between city and county and help beautify the trail's corridor and incorporate cultural initiatives along the trail. Current goals for the city's parks include fully developing the potential uses of each park and making the park system as a whole more accessible by addressing safety concerns and reconditioning facilities.

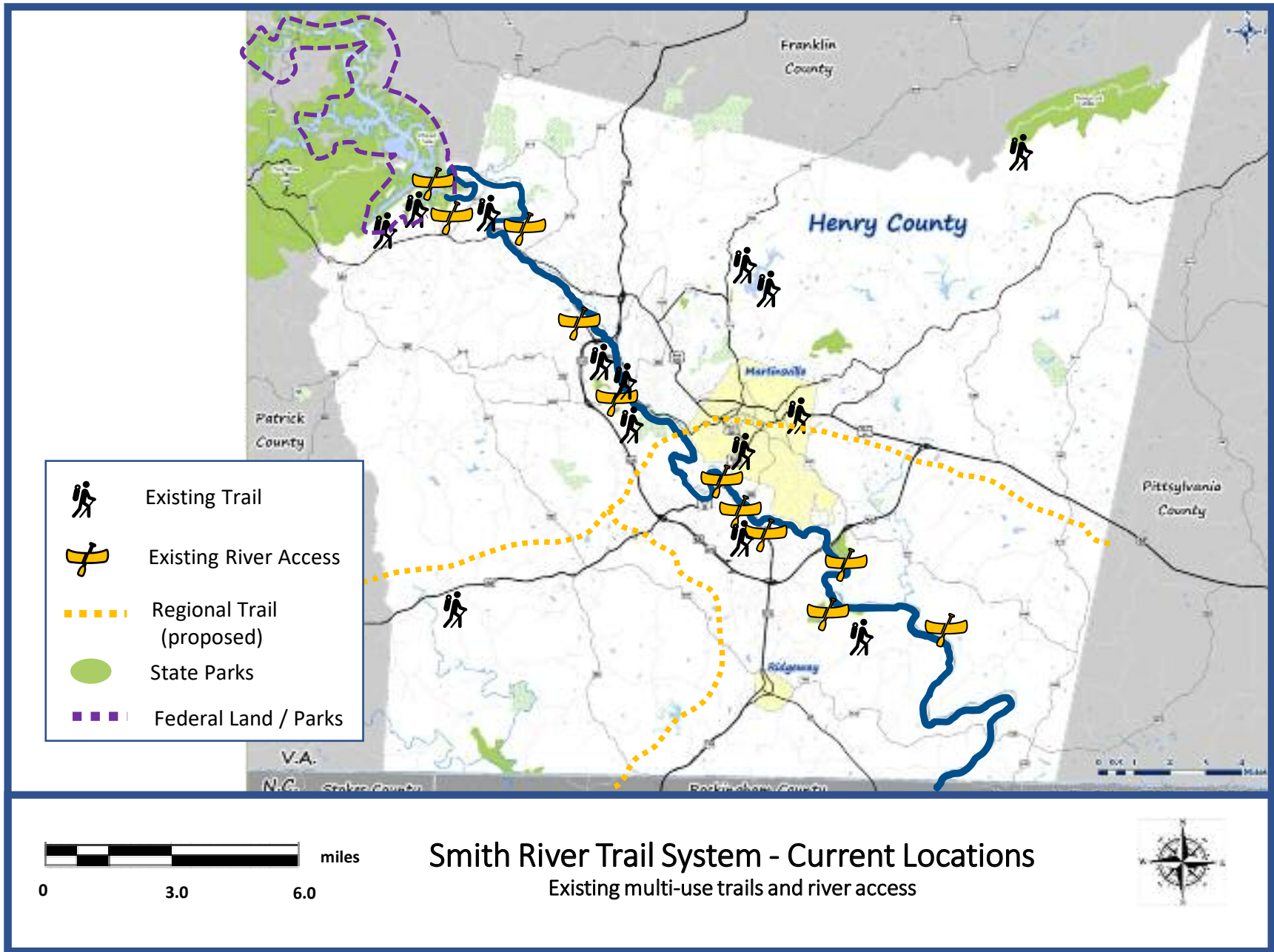
Current Trails in City of Martinsville	Tennis	Basketball	Ball field	Trails (miles)	Playground	Picnicking	Restroom	Acres	Location
Frank Wilson Memorial Park	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	30	Church St.
Beaver Creek Reservoir				2.0	*	*	*		Boat Ramp Road
Silver Bell Trail				0.7	*	*			Church St.
Dr. Dana O. Baldwin Memorial Park	*	*	*		*	*		15.5	Swanson St.
J. Russell Mason Park	*	*			*	*		6.5	Barrows Mill Rd.
Chatham Heights Park	*	*	*		*	*		9	Chatham Heights Rd.
Jackson Street Park	*				*	*		0.3	Jackson St.
Southside Park	*	*	*		*	*	*	37	Ranson Rd.
West End Park	*	*	*		*	*	*	13.72	Cardinal Ln.
Oak Street Park					*	*		1.10	Oak St.
Cole and Carol Street Park					*	*		1.6	Cole St.
Victor A. Lester Memorial Park					*	*		0.6	Mulberry Rd.
Spruce Street Park	*		*					5.2	Spruce St.
Hooker Field			*				*	7	Chatham Heights Rd.
Dick and Willie Passage Rail Trail				4.5	*	*			Virginia Ave Liberty Street Doyle Street Fisher Ave
Uptown Connection Spur Trail				0.8					Liberty St.



Current Trails in Henry County	Tennis	Ball field	Trails (Mi.)	Playground	Picnicking	Restroom	Volleyball	Acres	Location
Jack E. Dalton Park	*	0.6	*	*	*	*	*	30	Jack Dalton Rd.
Jordan Creek Park	*		*	*	*	*	*	13	Creekside Dr.
Collinsville Jaycee Park	*	1.25	*	*	*	*	*	27	Parkwood Ct.
Fisher Farm Park	*		*	*	*	*	*	127	Leisure Tr.
Fieldale Park	*		*	*	*	*	*	10	Field Ave.
Fieldale Trail			2.0	*	*	*	*	5	S. River Rd.
Figsboro Fields	*							5	Ridgedale Dr.
Horsepasture Ruritan	*							5	Al Philpott Hwy.
Doe Run Park			1.25	*	*	*	*	30	Dupont Rd.
Dick and Willie Passage Rail Trail			4.5	*	*	*	*		Virginia Ave Liberty Street Doyle Street Fisher Ave
Lauren Mountain Preserve			1.8	*	*	*	*	100	Wells Hollow Road
Gravelly Nature Preserve			2.1	*	*	*	*	75	Eggleston Falls Rd.
Mt. Olivet Ruritan	*							5	Ward Rd.
Samuel Hairston	*							5	Samuel Hairston School Rd.
Sauville Ruritan	*							5	Stones Dairy Rd.
Spencer-Penn Field	*	0.5	*					5	Spencer Penn Road

Current River Access Points	Restroom	Parking	Picnicking	Fishing	Trail	Shelter	Location
Philpott Dam - Henry	*	*	*	*	*		Philpott Dam Road
Philpott Dam - Franklin	*	*	*	*		*	Stoneybrook Road
Bassett		*	*	*			Trent Hill Drive
The Great Road	*	*	*	*	*		The Great Road
Fieldale Trail	*	*	*	*	*		River Road
Doe Run	*	*	*	*	*		Dupont Drive
South Martinsville		*	*	*			Tensbury Road
Frith Drive		*	*	*			Frith Drive
Smith River Sports Complex	*	*	*	*	*	*	Sportsplex Way Irishburg Road
Marrowbone Creek		*	*	*			Eggleston Falls Road
Mitchell Bridge		*	*	*			Mitchell Road





## State and Federal Land in Martinsville and Henry County

In the Dan River Basin, there are approximately 46,000 acres of state and federal land. In Martinsville and Henry County, there are four areas owned by state and federal governments: Philpott Lake, managed by the Army Corps of Engineers; Turkeycock Wildlife Management Area, managed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; Fairystone State Park, managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation; and the Mayo River State Park, expected to be managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

### Federal Lands

Federal lands are lands in the United States owned by the federal government. The Congress has the power to retain, sell and regulate federal lands, such as by limiting cattle grazing on them.

The federal government owns about 640 million acres of land in the United States, about 28% of the total land area of 2.27 billion acres. The majority of federal lands are administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), or U.S. Forest Service (FS). BLM, FWS, and NPS are part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, while the Forest Service is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. An additional 11.4 million acres of land (about 2% of all federal land) is owned by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). The majority of federal lands are located in Alaska and the Western states.

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Manages about 248.3 million acres of federal lands as of 2017, more than any other agency. Of these, 99.4% are in the 11 Western states or Alaska. BLM primarily emphasizes rangeland, but also administers lands for purposes other than grazing, including recreation, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish habitat, and conservation.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) - Manages about 89.1 million acres of federal land, of which 86% are in Alaska. FWS-administered land is primarily for conservation and promotion of wildlife; however, some other uses (such as resource extraction) are permitted under certain conditions and in certain areas.

National Park Service (NPS) - Manages about 79.8 million acres of federal land, of which 66% are in Alaska. There are slightly over 417 official NPS units with a variety of titles, including national park, national monument, national historic site, national recreation area, and national battlefield.

Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service (FS) - Manages about 192.9 million acres of national forests. Although Forest Service holdings are mostly in the West, FS also manages about 60% of all federal lands in the Eastern United States.

Together, the BLM, FWS, NPS, Forest Service, and DOD manage 97% of federal land. Federal agencies that control smaller amounts of land include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, the United States Postal Service, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the U.S. Department of Energy.

The American public owns all federal public lands, including National Parks, National Forests, Wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, and wildlife preserves. Every American has a personal stake and a guaranteed say in how these places are cared for, and all Americans have the right to experience and enjoy these places.

### State Lands

By contrast, state lands are held by state governments, and most of the land is required to generate revenue. State lands are not owned by state residents in the same way as public lands, and citizens who live in other states have no voice whatsoever in their management. Virginia generally manages state parks well, but they are governed by different rules than federal public lands. Citizens do not have a right to be on state lands, or the same rights as to how they are managed and sold.

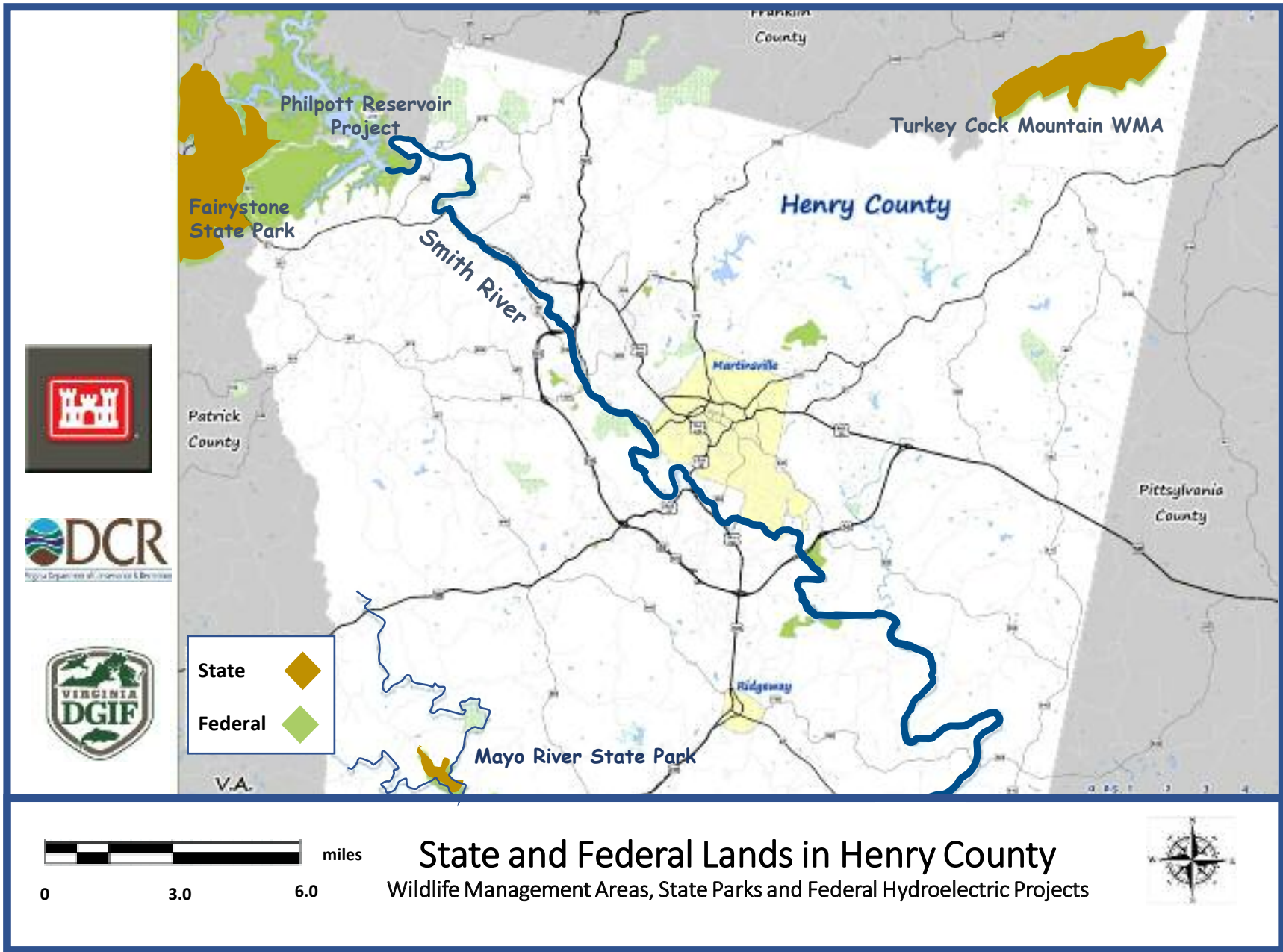


If it makes short-term economic sense for a state to lease a portion of its land for mineral development, subdivisions, extraction, or logging, states are well within their rights to do so. States have no obligation to involve state residents in these decisions.

All Americans share the costs to preserve these places. On average, the cost is about \$4 a year in income tax for public lands. If these places were transferred to the states, their governments and taxpayers would be solely responsible for managing upkeep, infrastructure, building roads, and fighting fires. This means taxpayers would be overburdened, or states would be forced to sell off lands to pay for maintenance.

There are local municipalities that resist selling state land to the federal government. In reality, federal land management is incredibly decentralized, and forest supervisors and park superintendents manage these federal lands with local input. While policies are crafted at the national level, they are implemented by locals at the local level.

Public lands, owned and managed by all Americans, are the backbone of an \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy, millions of jobs, and thriving local economies.

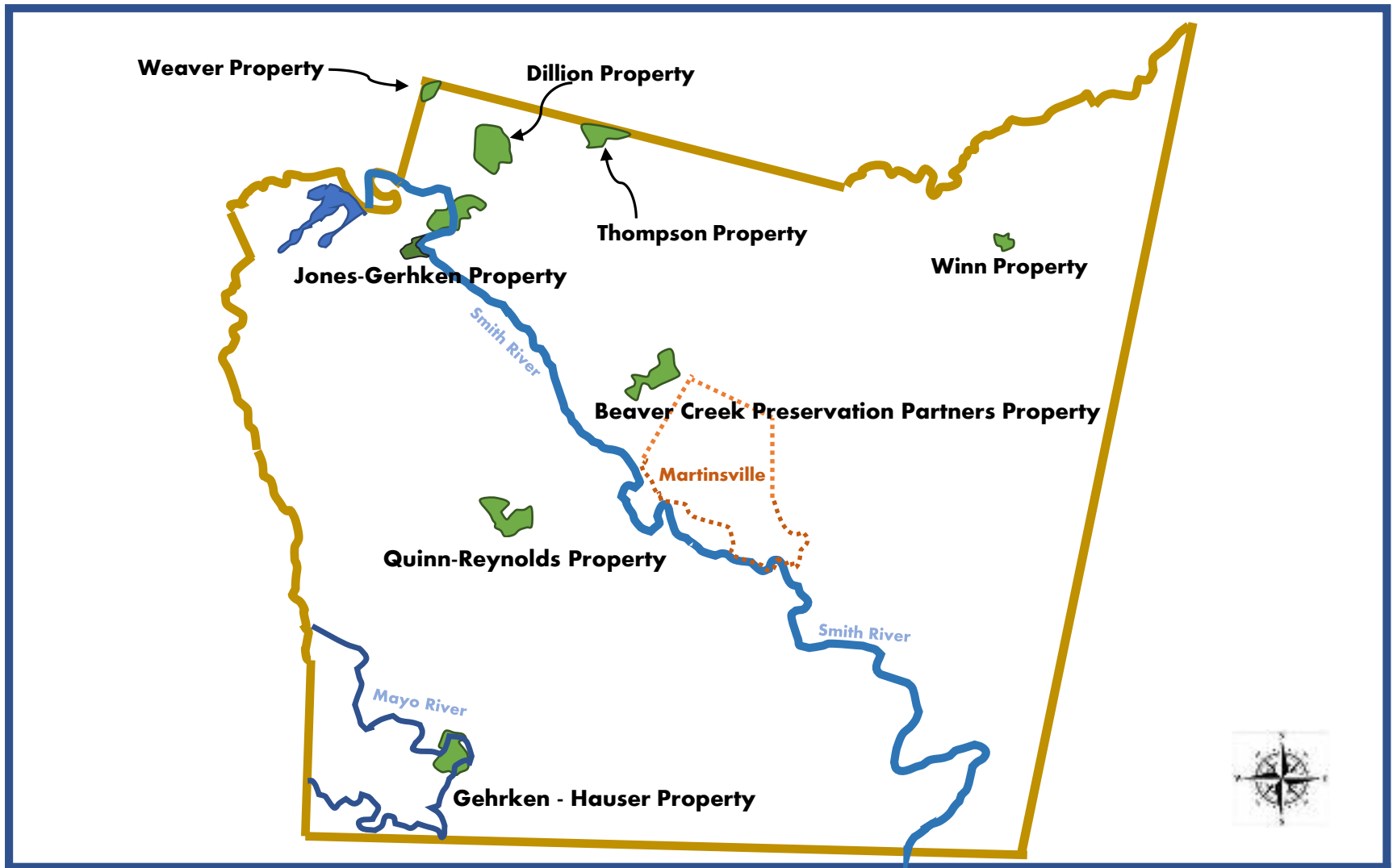




**Conservation Easements in Martinsville and Henry County**

Tax ID Number	Tract Name (or some kind of unique identifier)	Acres	Date Recorded	Protection Type	Easement Co-holder(s)	Tax Map Parcel Number(s)
124620000	Old Turner Place (King's Grant One)	7.66	04/21/04	Easement	Frances R. King, Jr. & Others Heirs of	41.1(000 )000 /001 ,
244765000	The Winn Properties	60.89	11/01/04	Easement	William E. and Barbara P. Winn	21.5(000 )000
75870005	Portion of the Jesse B. Gilley Estate	143.618	11/14/07	Easement	Danny L. and Martha H. Thompson	6.5(000 )000 /029
12235000	Beaver Creek Plantaion (in Collinsville Magisterial Dist.)	202.884	11/26/07	Easement	Beaver Creek Preservation Partners, LLC	29.6(000 )000 /119 , 29.9(000 )000 /118N,
55840015 55840014	Moore's Mill Area Along Mayo River	250.037	12/28/07	Easement	G. Andrew Gehrken and Lewis A. Hauser	69.2(000 )000 /021 , 69.2(000 )000 /022 ,
185340002 185340003 185340000 11450000 11450005	Quinn and Reynolds Properties along Meadowood Trail and Schoolfield Road (in Horsepasture Magisterial Dist.)	227.591	12/30/08	Easement	Walter J. and Verna W. Reynolds Mary R. Quinn Mary R. Quinn Mary R. Quinn Walter J. and Verna W. Reynolds	39.9(000 )000 /276 , 39.9(000 )000 /277 , 49.3(000 )000 /303 , 49.3(000 )000 /304 , 49.3(000 )000 /304A,
48840002 180640000 178950008	Dillon Properties along & between Philpott Drive and the Original Henry Road (in Reed Creek Magisterial Dist.)	401.744	11/03/09	Easement	Hiram T. Dillon, Sgl., Ruby D. Davis, Roxann B. Dillon, Div., D. L. Dillon, Jr., Matthew A. Davis, husband of Ruby D. and Mary S. Dillon, wife of D. L. Dillon, Jr.	4.8(007 )000 /004 , 4.9(000 )000 /101 , 4.9(000 )000 /096D
94900000 94900001 94900002 94900003	Jones and Gehrken Properties along the of Smith River and along Overhill Drive, both the Norfolk Suthern Railway, along Florence and along Sunset Drive , (in Reed Creek	102.878	11/01/10	Easement	David C. Jones and Karen O. Jones and G. Andrew Gehrken and Anna P. Gehrken	15.2(000 )000 /011 , 15.2(000 )000 /247 , 15.2(000 )000 /259 , 15.2(063 )000 /003 ,4
60150000 120770001	Jones and Gehrken Properties along the of Smith River and along and off of Lacky (in the Blackberry Magisterial Dist.)	77.718	12/29/11	Easement	David C. Jones and Karen O. Jones and G. Andrew Gehrken and Anna P. Gehrken	15.4(000 )000 /025 , 15.4(000 )000 /027 ,

\* See page 64 for easements definition



### Conservation Easements in Henry County

Easement holders – Virginia Outdoors Foundation , Blue Ridge Land Conservancy

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## Proposed Outdoor Recreational Assets



The Smith River Trail System is based upon the development of small localized trails in communities across the county with the intent to connect where possible to larger spines or trunk trails. This approach ensures that, at a minimum, each area would be in relatively close proximity to at least one major trail system. Other trails may, in time, branch off from the central spines, which are included in this plan. While many new trails have been developed in the past ten years, there are countless opportunities for continuous improvement of existing routes, new connections and new trail locations.

The focus of this master plan is to ensure that there is a trail in each community and to make connections county-wide that would provide for alternate forms of transportation and additional walking, biking and paddling opportunities. Analyzing current trail locations and natural geological features and utilizing public input revealed potential new trail routes and river access locations.

The implementation of the proposed projects in this plan will require the continued assistance of local, regional and state-wide partners and the support of residents, businesses and local officials. Funding for trail and river access projects can be obtained from several sources, including grants, capital campaigns, in-kind donations, monetary donations and government funding. Efforts should be taken to ensure the long-term viability of each trail, greenway or blueway by constructing projects in a sustainable and minimally invasive method, thereby protecting the natural environment of the area.

Following is a list of proposed new trails, river access points and additional outdoor recreational enhancements in Martinsville and Henry County.

Dick and Willie Passage

Lanier Farms Connector Trail

Jones Creek Connector Trail

Fisher Farm Park / Marrowbone Creek Trails

Beaver Creek Reservoir Lakeshore Trail

Spencer Penn Trail Project

Fieldale Connector Trail and Steps

Doe Run - Marshland Trail

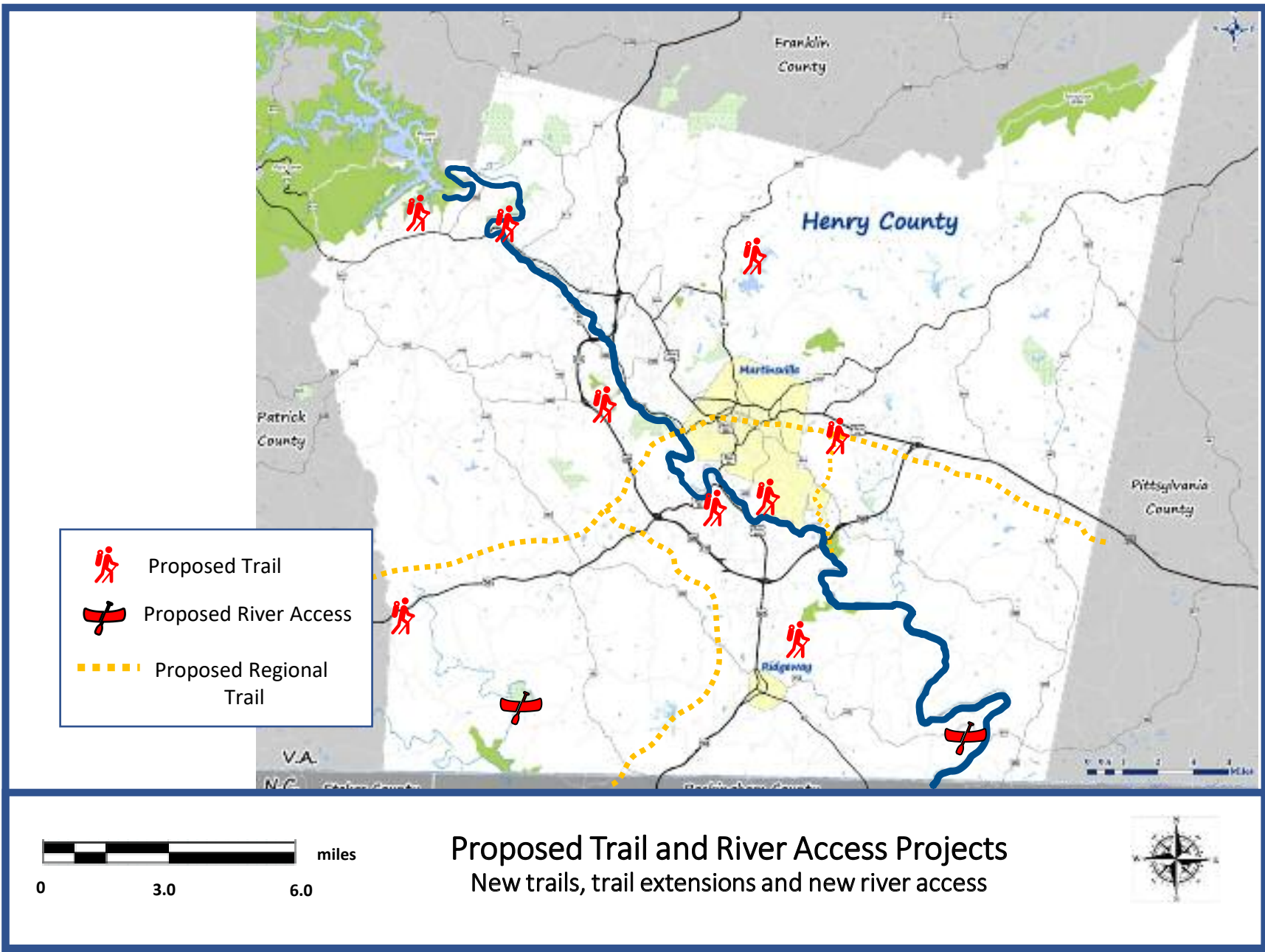
Mayo River State Park

Philpott Lake Trails

Bassett Trout Park Concept

Smith River Blueway

Improvements & Additions to Current Assets



**Proposed Trail and River Access Projects**  
 New trails, trail extensions and new river access

## The Dick and Willie Passage Rail Trail

The Dick and Willie Passage Rail Trail is one of Henry County's premier trails. "Dick and Willie" was the nickname coined by the first engineer and brakesman to work on the Danville and Western Railway line. This paved, multi-use trail has four trailhead/parking areas at various locations with restrooms at two parking areas. The project is a joint effort between Henry County and the City of Martinsville. Phase 1-5 was completed in 2010 and currently extends 4.5 miles from the Virginia Ave trailhead to Mulberry Creek. The initial trail was constructed on the abandoned Norfolk Southern railway right-of-way purchased by Henry County.

The Dan River Basin Association proposed the original project to Henry County in 2006 and by 2009, the railroad Right-of-Way had been purchased. Anderson and Associates were the primary engineers on the original project with Henry County supplying engineers and DRBA working on the signage and historical aspects. The initial project was 4.5 miles completed in 2010 with future development proposed to extend the trail in both directions as funding became available. Virginia Department of Transportation T-Bill funding was the primary funding resource for the initial phase while Harvest Foundation, Henry County and the City of Martinsville added monetary and labor resources. Currently the Dick & Willie Passage connects to the 0.3-mile long Silverbell Trail and the 0.6-mile long Uptown Connection Trail. One unique characteristic of the D&W Passage is that while walking it you often feel like you are in the middle of the wilderness, but really you are just a stone's throw from modern conveniences. The connector trails bring you out in the heart of Martinsville's arts and cultural district. The D&W is listed for inclusion on the DCR Beaches to Bluegrass proposed trail.

The primary objective is to extend the trail and create a contiguous 10 miles by acquiring more easements or land purchases in either direction.

The proposed routes are:

- Virginia Avenue to Koehler
- Mulberry creek to the Smith River Sports Complex

The continuation of the trail west to the Smith River at Koehler cannot be completed until Norfolk Southern abandons the current inactive rail line from Virginia Avenue to Appalachian Drive, or alternate routes are found. Private land owners holding additional segments of the old railway line from Mulberry Creek, through the Chatmoss area were contacted for possible easements to continue the trail east. Since property owners along the proposed route would not grant easements for the extension of the trail, a new route was investigated.

In February 2011, a team including Henry County Commission Chairman, Director of the Public Service Authority, Henry County Parks and Recreation Director, and the Dan River Basin Association Program Manager explored the active sewer line

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** Mile 0 GPS - 36.697444, -79.899264

**Trailheads located at** -1094 Virginia Avenue, 699 Liberty Street, 220 Doyle Street, 815 Fisher Street

**Trail Length(s):** 4.5 miles (existing)

**Type:** Multi-use, paved surface trail

**Proposed Timeline:** 6B, projected completion Spring 2019. 6A proposed, projected start date 2020

**Potential Partners:** Henry County, local area foundations, VDOT, DRBA

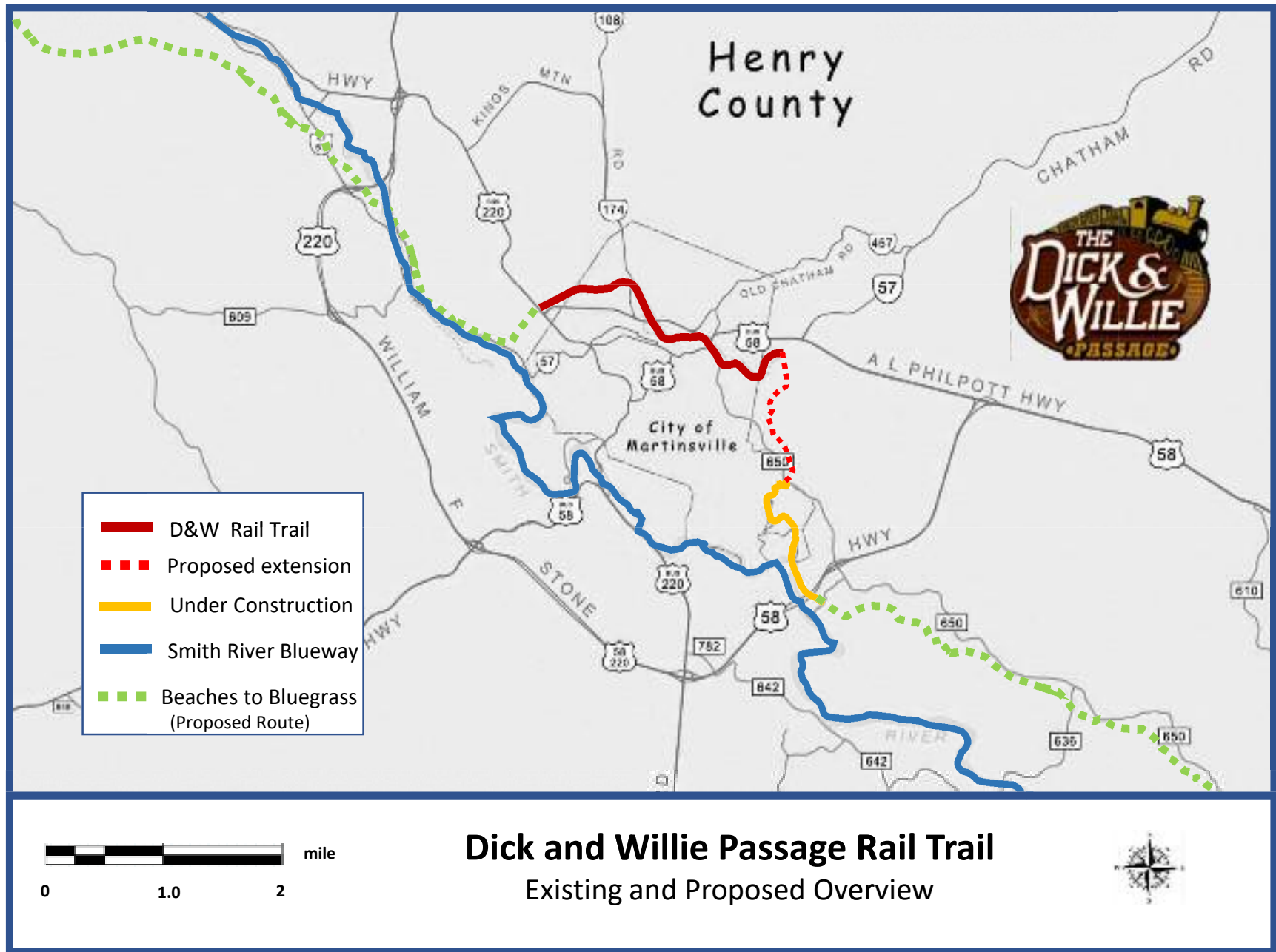
**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, local area foundations, VDOT T-Bills

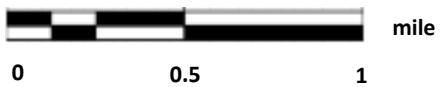
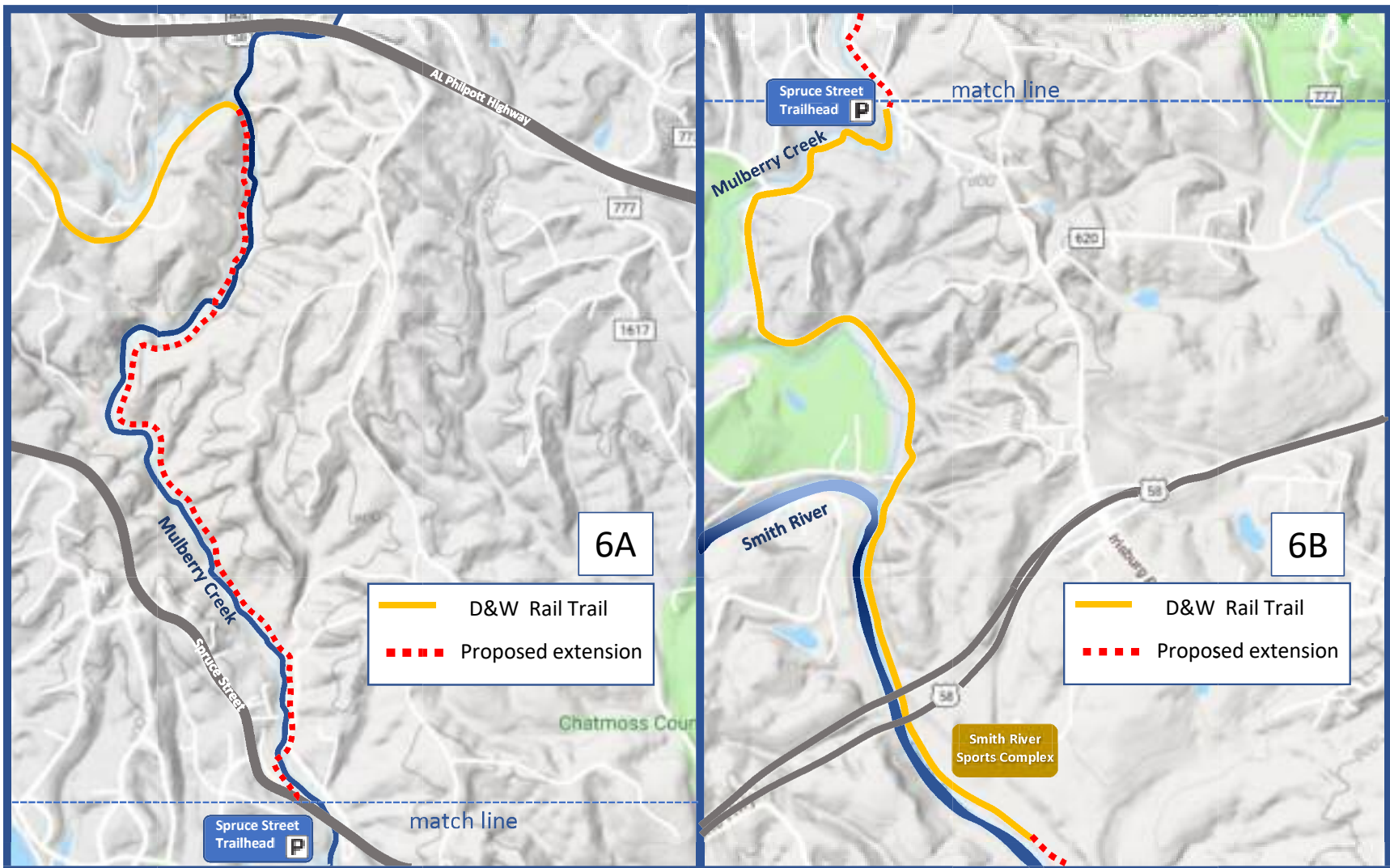
**Issues to Consider:** Extending trail in both directions from current ends, obtaining new easements, surrounding property owner involvement, connectivity to existing trails

easement from Mulberry Creek to Spruce Street and determined this to be a viable route. Additional routes were explored that would continue the trail to the Smith River Sports Complex including utilization of streets, installation of sidewalks and additional routes through private property. The decision was made to begin work on a proposal and funding to extend the D&W from the current end at Mulberry Creek to the Smith River Sports Complex. This connection would add a distance of approximately 5.2 miles, providing a total length of nearly 10 miles. The economic impact of the additional mileage would be realized in increase trail use, the ability to hold a marathon and additional races, and increased use by the local community improving overall health and quality of life.

The proposed route extension from Mulberry to the Sports Complex is created as Phase 6A and 6B. Phase 6A extends from mile 4.5 to Spruce Street. Phase 6B extends from Spruce Street to the Smith River Sports Complex.

Phase 6C would extend the D&W passage from mile 0 at Virginia Avenue west to Appalachian Drive, then north along the track of an existing abandoned railway bed alongside the current active line. There are several possible routes that would include this old rail bed or additional property on the west side of Appalachian Drive. Regardless of the final routing, some road crossings will be unavoidable and will need either a pedestrian bridge or safe crosswalks. An additional proposal would include a bridge across the Smith River to connect the D&W to the Fieldale Trail. The proposed route along Appalachian Drive may also include recently acquired land adjoining the current Henry County parcel from Koehler Road to Woodale.

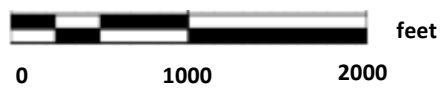
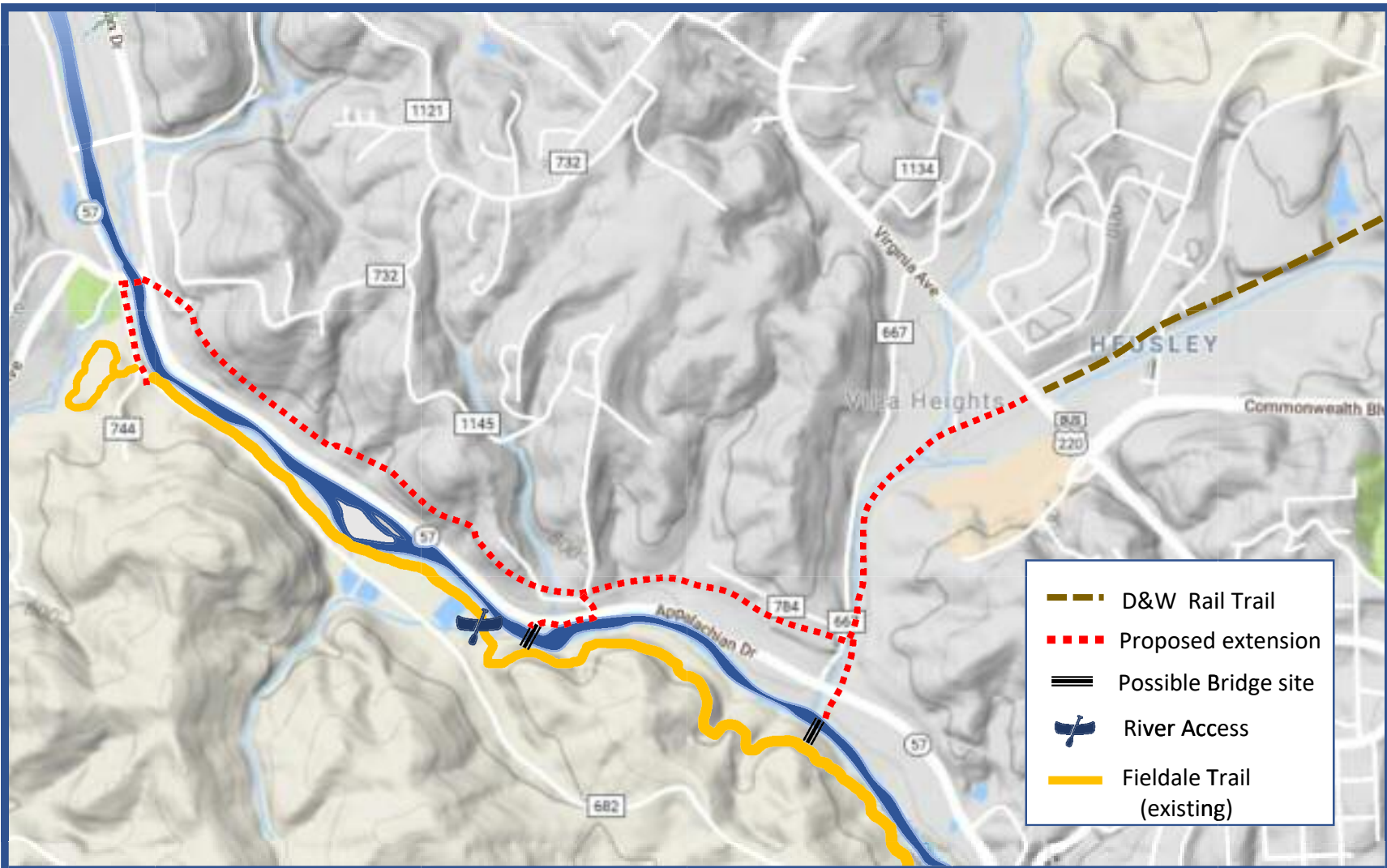




## Dick and Willie Passage – Phase 6A - 6B

Proposed extension from current end of trail to Spruce Street





## Dick and Willie Passage - Fieldale Extension

Proposed extension from Virginia Ave to Fieldale Trail





## Lanier Farms Trail and River Access

The City of Martinsville repaired the interceptor sewer-line along the Smith River from Dye Plant Road to the Forest Park. This area has always been used by fishermen and ATV users and the additional clearing has created more active trails. There is currently a utility easement, but not a recreation easement at this point. A trail along the line could be a stand-alone trail or connect to phase 6B of the Dick and Willie Passage at Mulberry Creek.

The area of the proposed trail route has a variety of ownership with the bulk of land held by Lanier Farms. A discussion with Lanier Farms for an easement has been productive, and additional property owners should be pursued. There is a protected archeological site along the river that is owned by an archeological society. The area is suitable for a trail head and parking. The public trail would allow connection to the river and the Dick And Willie for city residents in the Mulberry Drive region, and additional dead-end side streets could be utilized to connect to the trail along the route.

Proposed hiking and biking trails would allow access to scenic views of the river and follow the existing sewer-line easement from Rives Road to Forest Park County Club. An additional section through Forest Park could connect via a bridge across Mulberry Creek to the Dick and Willie Passage 6B extension.



There is also a city-owned access road off Meadowview Road that leads to an area that could be utilized for parking and a trailhead. The trail should be routed away or along the edge of the mapped site. Several stream crossings would need bridges. Dead-end roads could potentially connect the trail to Mulberry Drive residents. The ability to connect a large community adjacent to this region of the city would be an exceptional addition to the trail system and provide direct access to phase 6B of the Dick and Willie trail that leads to Spruce Street and the Smith River Sports Complex.

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.646007, -79.844013, 1700 Meadowview Ln., Martinsville, VA 24112

**Trail Length(s):** Proposed trail would be approximately 1.2 miles

**Type:** Multi-use, paved or gravel surface trail

**Proposed Timeline:** Sewer-line easement is ready for trail prep. After funding acquired, estimated completion of construction is 6 months

**Potential Partners:** Martinsville City, Forest Park Country Club, Henry County, local area foundations, DRBA.

**Funding Opportunities:** Martinsville City, Henry County, local area foundations, other grants should be investigated for urban trail connections

**Issues to Consider:** Obtaining new easements, surrounding property owner involvement in process. Connection to Dick and Willie phase 6B will require a bridge across Mulberry Creek.

A new river access at Forest Park Country Club would be a complement to this connector trail. The actual location of the river access could potentially be upstream from the confluence of Mulberry Creek and the Smith River. This location would be adjacent to Phase 6B of the Dick and Willie passage currently under construction. This access would be an excellent addition to the area for paddlers wishing to solo paddle and set shuttle with their bikes.

Interpretive signage explaining the trail, the river, and the importance of riparian buffers could be installed near the river access ramp. This location would also afford many residents river access that would be in walking or biking distance from the Lanier Farms/ Mulberry Road communities.

A section of the proposed trail would come near a Native American archeological location known as the Belmont Site. This historic site was excavated and catalogued by the late Richard P. Gravelly in a detailed report with fascinating accounts of Native American burial and artifacts discovered at the location. This would be an excellent opportunity to install educational signage explaining the significance of the site and a description of early river use. This would also afford better protection of the site which currently has seen some evidence of looting/digging.

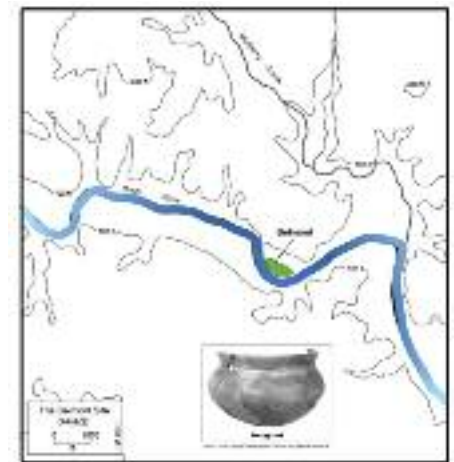
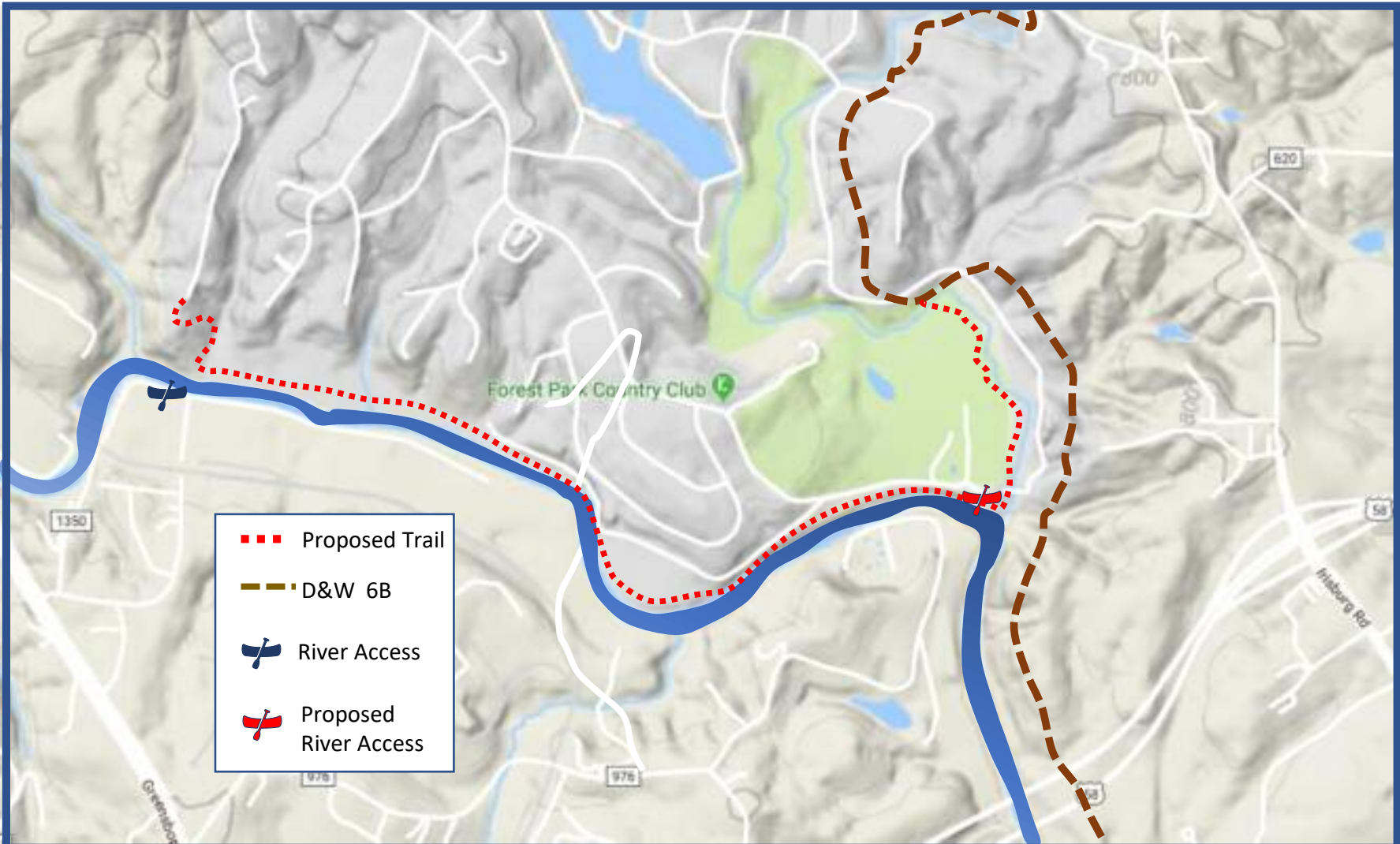


Figure 7. Map of the Belmont site along the Smith River and upstream from Forest Park Country Club.



- - - Proposed Trail
- - - D&W 6B
- River Access
- Proposed River Access



**Lanier Farms Trail and River Access**  
 Proposed trail connection to Dick and Willie Passage Phase 6B



## Jones Creek Connector Trail and Pond Loop

A proposed route would connect the Martinsville High School to the SOVA Memorial Hospital with multi-use hiking and biking trails. The primary loop would connect the high school and the hospital, while the secondary loop would encircle the pond. Various access points would allow for parking for this easy to moderate trail which could be utilized by hospital employees, high school students and the public. Possible trail uses include a teaching laboratory, student clean-ups, water quality monitoring, and health and wellness of hospital patients and staff.

Water Quality monitoring would be the perfect fit for the pond loop trail and easy access directly from the high school would mean opportunities for filling the Meaningful Watershed Experience Curriculum requirements. The SOVA site could capitalize on the health benefits of the trail with doctors writing prescriptions for a healthy lifestyle that include hiking or biking. Interpretive signage could be added on a variety of topics from water quality and pond life to wildlife in an urban setting.



The property for the proposed trail is owned by Lester Lumber, and easements would first need to be obtained. The trail would be natural surface or pea gravel through a wooded section of land with an additional loop possible around the existing pond, making the trail over two miles in length. Current use by ATV's and pedestrians from the surrounding subdivision is evident with some illegal dumping activity present.

### At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.698284, -79.861381, 305 Fairy St Exd, Martinsville, VA 24112

**Trail Length(s):** Proposed trail would be approximately 1.2 miles

**Type:** Multi-use, natural surface trail

**Proposed Timeline:** Easements and funding to be obtained by 2020. Estimated completion of construction, 6 months.

**Potential Partners:** Martinsville City, SOVA Memorial Hospital, Martinsville High School, local area foundations, DRBA

**Funding Opportunities:** SOVA Memorial Hospital, Martinsville City, local area foundations, other grants to be investigated include health and wellness project funding.

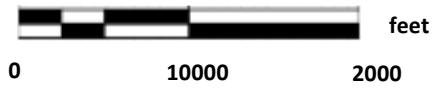
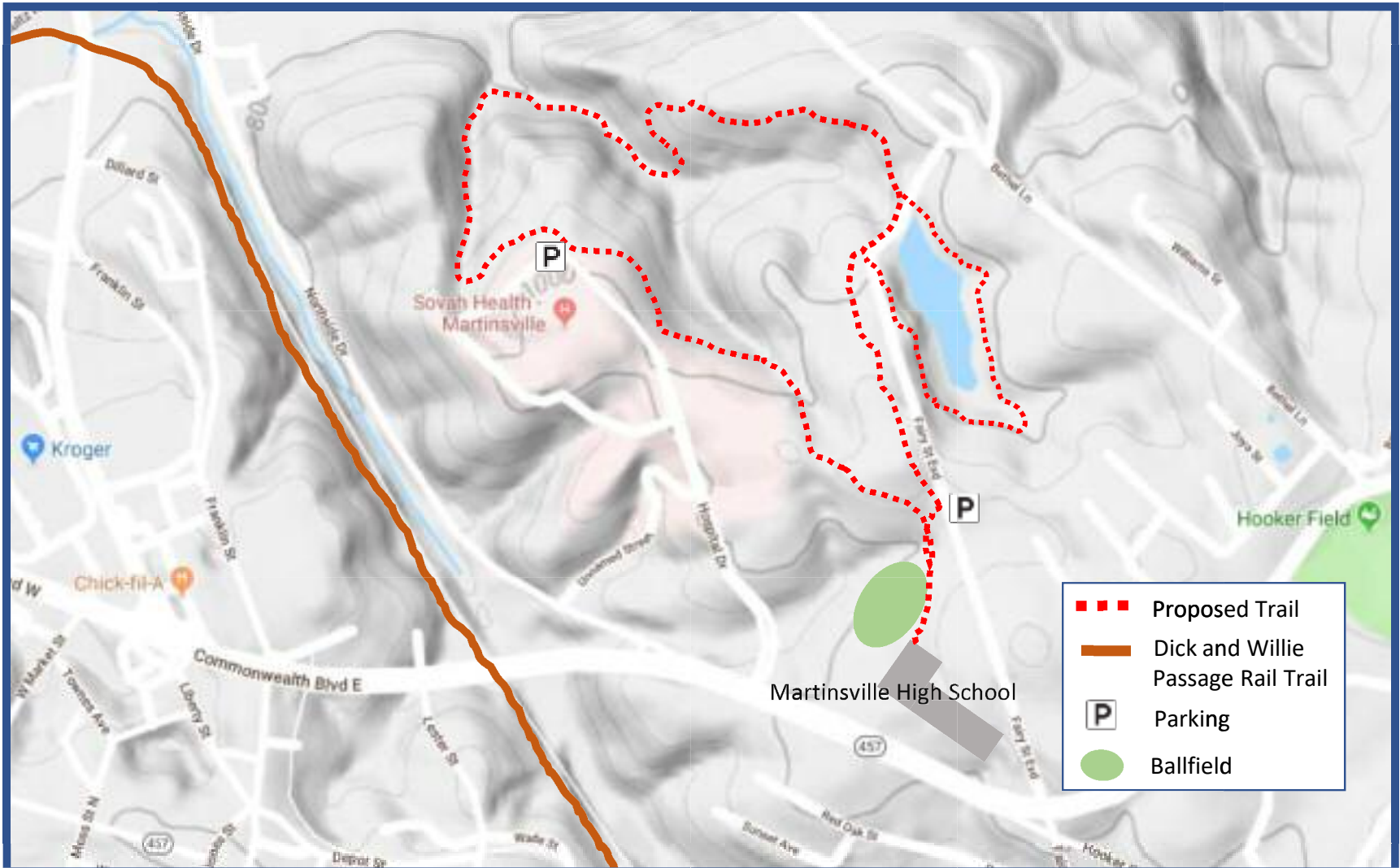
**Issues to Consider:** Obtaining new easements (Lester Corporation, SOVA, MHS), surrounding property owner involvement in process. Parking and trail head at both SOVA and MHS

A trail would be contingent on easements. A partnership between Martinsville City Schools and Memorial Hospital should be fostered for long-term maintenance.

Additionally, the actual trail building could be accomplished either by high school groups, with direction, or by local bike and hiking clubs.

Possible funding partners include Martinsville City, Harvest, Lester Lumber, and Memorial Hospital. To date this is only a concept. No property owners have been approached at this time.





**Jones Creek Connector Trail and Pond Loop**  
 Proposed trail connects Martinsville High School with SOVA Hospital



## Fisher Farm Park / Marrowbone Creek Trails

Fisher Farm Park is a 127-acre multi-use park maintained by Henry County Parks and Recreation. The park consists of two full-sized baseball fields, a large 80 ft x 45 ft pavilion, and a smaller 45 ft x 30 ft. Trails are proposed for the park that would border Marrowbone Creek and connect to the Smith River Access.

After its establishment in 1968, amenities were added over several years to include baseball fields, pavilion with picnic tables, and playground equipment. Henry County Parks and Recreation also maintains a maintenance shop and storage area at this facility.

The park borders Marrowbone Creek and two flood controlled dams on the creek. One of the dams is approximately 15 ft high and located just below the end of the road parking area. The second dam is located further downstream and was used for hydroelectric generation to power homes and farms in the area from 1930-40.

Down the road from the park is the location of the Burgess family cemetery on private property, whose marker can be seen from the road. Up the road closer to the Town of Ridgeway, the old site of Phoso Springs Hotel recalls the era when the sulfur springs were thought to have healing capabilities and brought tourists from far off the beaten path to the enjoy the hotel and springs.



This park has ample usable land to add hiking trails. Currently a proposal is in progress that would create approximately 1.5 miles of new trail bordering Marrowbone Creek. The trail would connect the upper pavilion with the parking area and circumnavigate the ball fields as it meanders along Marrowbone Creek. A set of steps or possible rock rungs would need to be placed to allow the trail to continue around the dam and rock wall. Additional proposals would take the Marrowbone Creek trails downstream to Marrowbone Access along a steep embankment. The creek and surrounding lands are scenic and heavily wooded.

### At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.612907, -79.832837, 861 Old Mill Rd, Ridgeway, VA 24148

**Trail Length(s):** Proposed loop trail would be approximately 1.5 miles

**Type:** Multi-use, natural surface trail

**Proposed Timeline:** Shovel-ready, start date dependent on Henry County work schedule, possibly Fall, 2019. Estimated completion - 4 months.

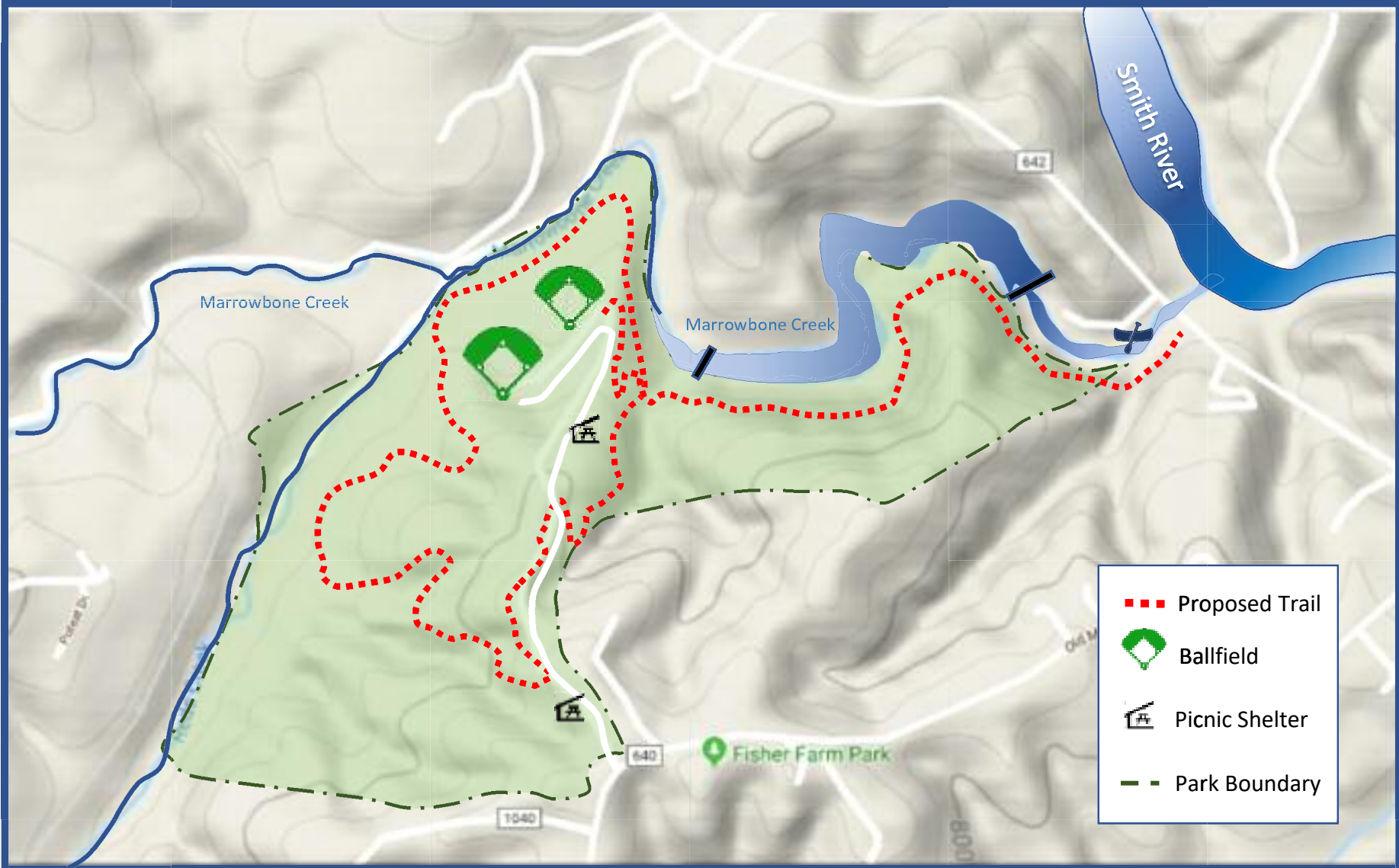
**Potential Partners:** Henry County Parks and Recreation, DRBA, local bike and hiking clubs, Eagle scout projects, trail building class demos

**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, in-kind donation of labor from local trail builders

**Issues to Consider:** Henry County Parks and Rec can do initial grading, partnering with local trail builders interested in adding a new trail or hand finishing. Steps may be needed near Marrowbone Creek upper dam. Proposed trail could potentially connect to Marrowbone Creek. Fencing or other barrier would need to be considered near Fisher Dam.

Marrowbone Creek is an important tributary of the Smith River, and making the connection via trail would create a scenic and historic route. Interpretive signage along the creek could tell the history of the area as well as wildlife facts and water quality needs, including protection of riparian buffers. A mountain bike trail was started in 2006 and could be completed in the rugged terrain between the first pavilion and the creek. A trail would also allow a water quality monitoring station along Marrowbone Creek and access to the waterway for fishing and wading. Fisher Farm Park is utilized for its large pavilion, excellent playground and ball fields. The addition of a trail would increase the capacity and attraction for this Henry County park close to the North Carolina state line.





**Fisher Farm Park – Marrowbone Creek**  
 Proposed trail and connection to Marrowbone Creek River Access



## Beaver Creek Reservoir Lakeshore Trail

The Beaver Creek Reservoir, a 175-acre lake with a 1.3 billion gallon capacity, is the primary water supply for the City of Martinsville. The beautiful lake is surrounded by hardwood and pine forest in a remote and peaceful setting providing an area for recreational activities such as picnicking, hiking, fishing and boating.

The proposed new trail would add to the existing trail system and circumnavigate the lakeshore at the Beaver Creek Reservoir in Henry County, Virginia. The trail system project was begun in 2009 with a grant from the Harvest Foundation and in partnership with Patrick Henry Community College and the City of Martinsville. An environmental survey was completed in 2009, and work began in early 2010 on Phase I.

In March of 2011, a grand opening marked the completion of Phase I, the “PHCC Loop Trail” at the trailhead and parking located near the Frith Building on the PHCC campus. With Phase I complete, the access to the lakeshore easement held by the City of Martinsville was realized, and the possibility of additional trails to include the PHCC campus and a connection with the parking area and public use boat ramp located across the lake became a reality. Ample parking at PHCC and an easy access trailhead could provide the amenity to allow additional trail mileage installed along the 10 + miles of shoreline.

In 2011, plans were completed and work began on Phase II of the Beaver Creek Trail System, which included additional mileage of multi-use trail, with a trailhead located near the public boat launch with ample parking and a restroom facility. The “Rock Ridge Trail” of the Beaver Creek Reservoir Trail System was successfully completed and opened in April of 2012. This additional one-mile loop trail encompassed a beautiful hardwood ridge and connected with the existing “fishermen’s” path along the lakeshore. An easement from The Lester Group allowed access to the land that created continuity from the city-owned easement at the public access area.

A lakeshore trail of over 12 miles could be realized utilizing the existing trailheads currently in place and extending and connecting the current trails. The PHCC Loop trail is the perfect location from which to continue this shoreline trail. The City of Martinsville holds a 100-foot “high water shoreline easement” where a trail can be located. Some trail and old logging paths currently exist, and a naturally occurring geological “bench” allows for the construction of a trail with minimal disturbance to the riparian area. A contracted trail building job for a natural surface trail 36 – 48 inches wide encompassing the entire 10 mile lakeshore as it currently exists would cost approximately \$250,000. The additional cost of bridge building or boardwalk needs in wet areas could conceivably raise this figure to \$300,000.

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.747533, -79.871268 (Boat Ramp Road) 36.740103, -79.870713 (PHCC)

**Trail Length(s):** Proposed trail would be approximately 12.5 miles

**Type:** Multi-use, natural surface trail

**Proposed Timeline:** Shovel-ready, start date dependent on funding and partners. Estimated completion, 2 years

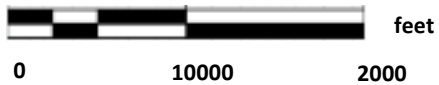
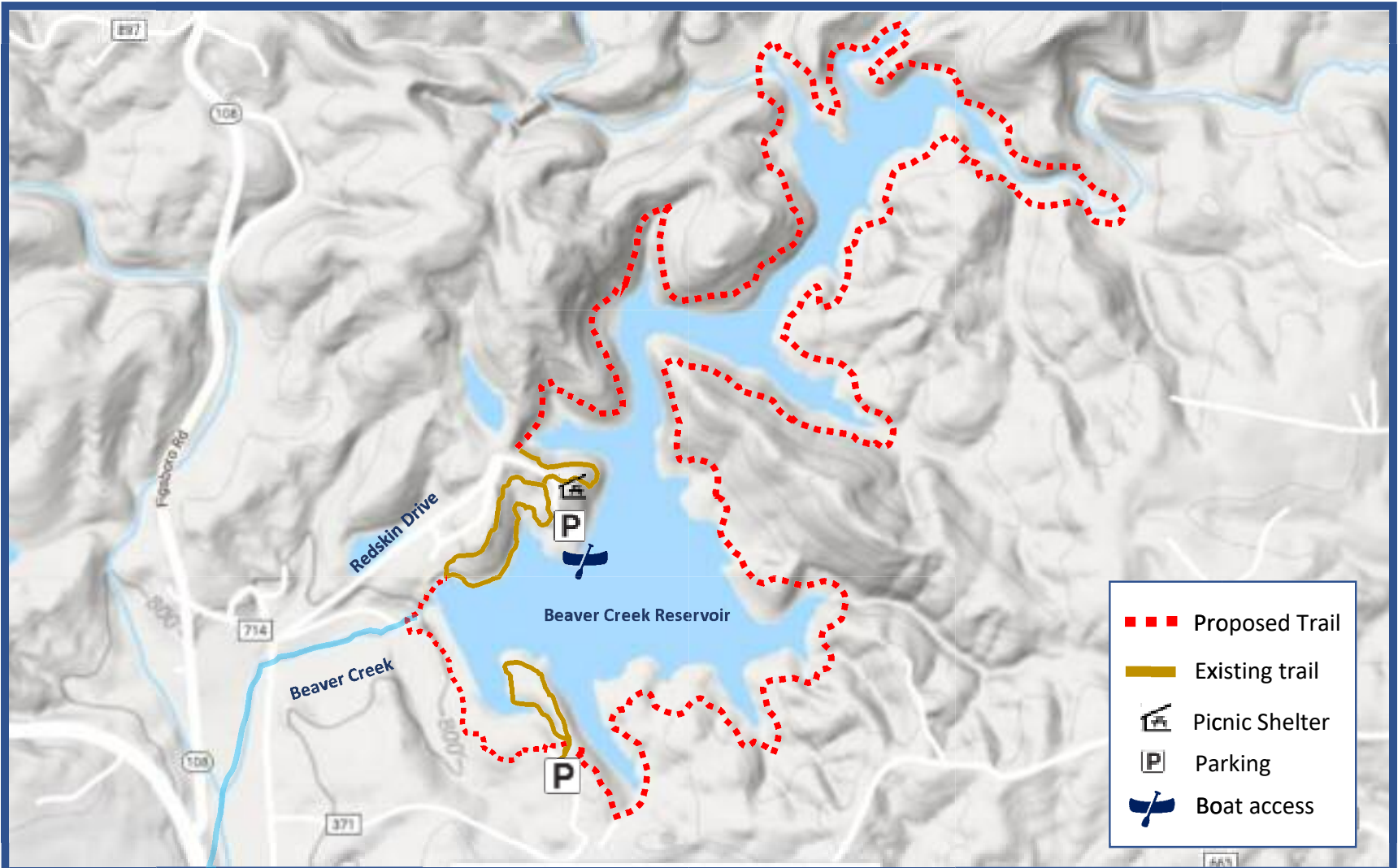
**Potential Partners:** City of Martinsville, Henry County Parks and Recreation, DRBA, local bike and hiking clubs, Eagle Scout projects, trail building classes. Potential to create adopt-a-trail committee to oversee long term project.

**Funding Opportunities:** City of Martinsville, local area foundations, in-kind donation of labor

**Issues to Consider:** The two existing trails on either side of the lake should be the starting points for construction. The City of Martinsville owns a 100-foot easement around the lake but some additional easements from surrounding property owners may be needed due to terrain (Lester Corporation). Bridges and boardwalks may be needed at low lying areas and coves. These could be potential Eagle Scout projects. Trail building around lake can be done manually as an on-going local project for hikers and bikers.

Utilizing a trained force of volunteer labor, a trail project reaching 10+ miles could be obtained with minimal expenditure. The materials and primary construction cost would include possible bridges over streams entering the lake where needed. These stream crossings or wet areas would need to be assessed, and bridges may or may not be required in some areas where a set-back in the woods can achieve similar results, thus eliminating the cost of bridge construction. Bridge projects, benches and pathways can also be completed as Eagle Scout projects. DRBA is willing to assist with expert consultation and partnership with PHCC and the City of Martinsville. A starting point would be a stakeholder meeting including PHCC administration, DRBA, and the City of Martinsville officials to discuss future plans.





**Beaver Creek Reservoir Lakeshore Trail**  
 Shoreline trail around lake connects to existing trail





## Spencer Penn Trail Project

The Spencer-Penn Centre is an education and special events center in Spencer, Virginia near Highway 58 on the eastern edge of Henry County. The mission of the preservation project is to provide an educational and special events center for the surrounding communities by preserving the structure, facilities, artifacts and history of the Spencer-Penn School.



The Centre has a library and provides programs to inform people about a variety of subjects, allows them to experience the performing arts, and provides healthy activities for their families. This facility also provides a place where they can celebrate special events in addition to ballfields and walking tracks.

The Spencer-Penn Centre has emerged as a thriving community resource while at the same time standing as a tribute to the remarkable volunteer spirit of the people of Spencer. Amenities added over the years include a walking trail, baseball fields, pavilion with picnic tables and playground equipment. Henry County Parks and Recreation also maintains a maintenance shop and storage area at this facility.

A trail has been proposed that would add to the existing trail and with the proper easements



## At a Glance

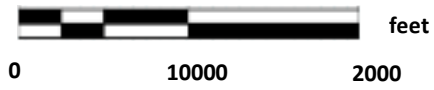
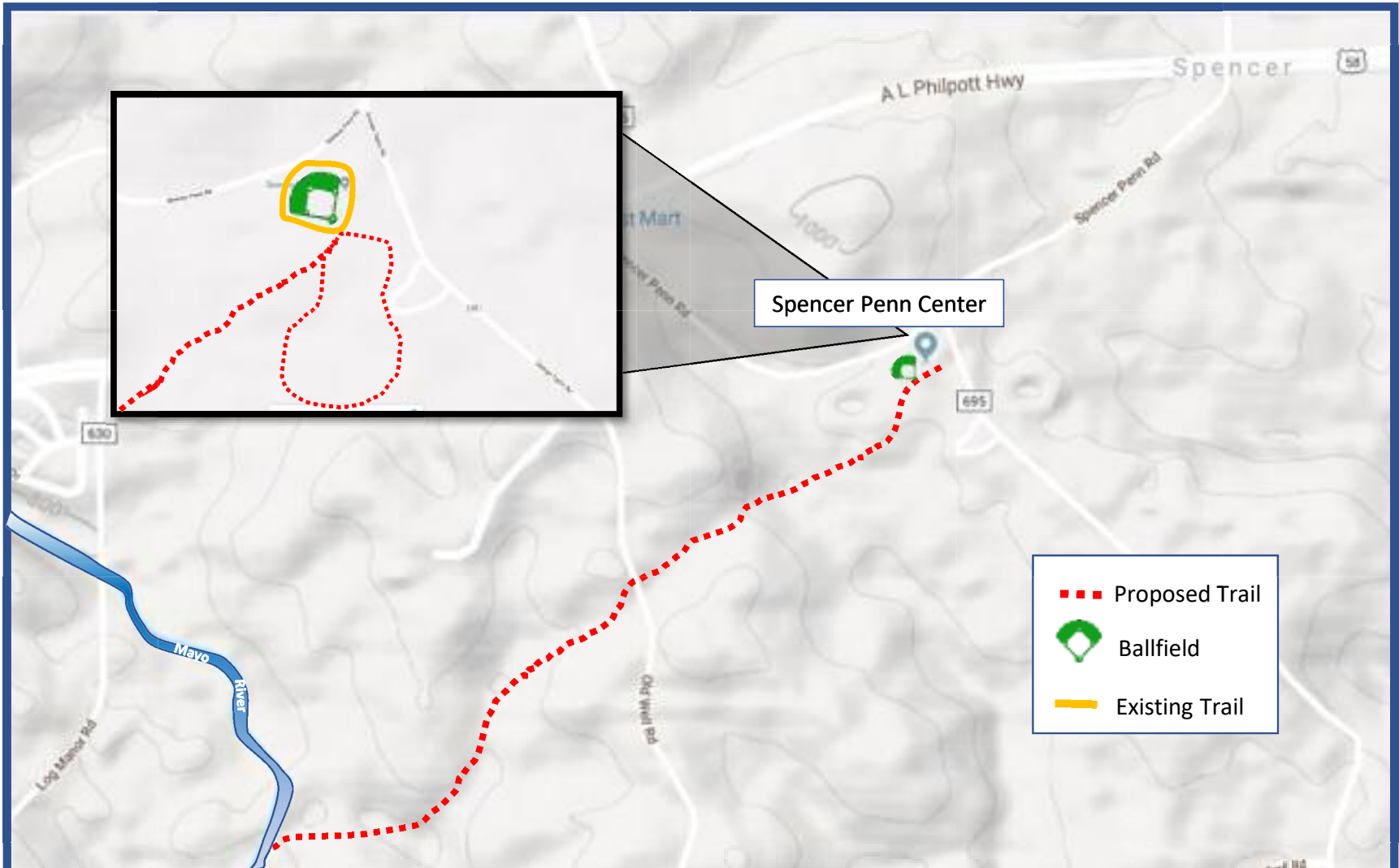
**Location(s):** GPS: 36.614776, -80.013677, 75 Spencer Penn Rd, Spencer, VA 24165  
**Trail Length(s):** Proposed trail approximately 1-mile to the North Mayo River  
**Type:** Multi-use, natural surface; partial pavement for loop or short distance  
**Proposed Timeline:** Once easements, trail design and funding are obtained, project could be completed in as little as 3 months. Projected completion date: Summer 2020  
**Potential Partners:** Spencer Penn Centre, Henry County, DRBA  
**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, City of Martinsville, local area foundations, in-kind donation of labor  
**Issues to Consider:** Needs public input specifically from Spencer community, with targeted outreach to senior citizens. Private landowner easements will be needed.

obtained, could reach the North Mayo River. The additional trail would be the eastern most trail in Henry County and could in time be the starting point for a connection to the Patrick County Trail System.

Interpretive signage could recall the history of the area and add insight and a sense of place for local residents and a destination for visitors in addition to the health benefits of a nearby hiking trail for local residents.

The Centre has been successful in acquiring grants to improve the facility and funding for historic structures and community development. A partnership with Henry County could be utilized with additional in-kind donations of labor and materials.





## Spencer Penn Trail Project

Proposed trails connect Spencer Penn to Mayo River



## Fieldale Connector Trail and Steps

Fieldale, Virginia is a historic small town on the Smith River that is rich in textile history and a destination for tourists seeking to shop for antiques, hike the nearby trails, and access the Smith River. Focal points of the community include the Smith River, the site of the Old Iron Bridge, and the old factory, famous for Fieldcrest -Cannon textiles.

The Fieldale Community Center is the hub of activities throughout the year with a recently remodeled outdoor pool and striking new event pavilion.



Just down the hill lies the Fieldale Park and site of the historic Iron Bridge Memorial placed along a section of the Fieldale Trail. The trail was one of the first hiking trails installed in the area and is a highly used amenity.



Fieldale is steeped in the tradition of the textile industry recognized by the Textile Heritage Trail, a hiking trail with boardwalk and interpretative signage that pays homage to the history of the region.

Fishermen often access the river along the Fieldale Trail. A mapped “Urban Trail Route” guides visitors around the section of the downtown. Connecting downtown and the park is the goal of the Fieldale Connector steps and trail.

The proposed trail includes the construction of a set of steps that would lead up a large embankment that borders the western side of Fieldale Park. A walking trail would connect these steps to the Fieldale and Textile Heritage trails and be the connection between the sidewalks of town and the river. The park and the town are

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.701177, -79.935248, 350 Co Rd 609, Fieldale, VA 24089

**Trail Length(s):** The steps would connect sidewalks in the town of Fieldale to Fieldale Park and the Fieldale Trail

**Type:** Trail Connector

**Proposed Timeline:** Start date contingent on funding. Construction could be completed in less than 2 months

**Potential Partners:** Henry County Parks and Recreation, Economic Development and Tourism, Small Towns Collaborative, Virginia Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fieldale United Methodist, DRBA

**Funding Opportunities:** Virginia Department of Housing and Urban Development, Henry County, EDC, local area foundations

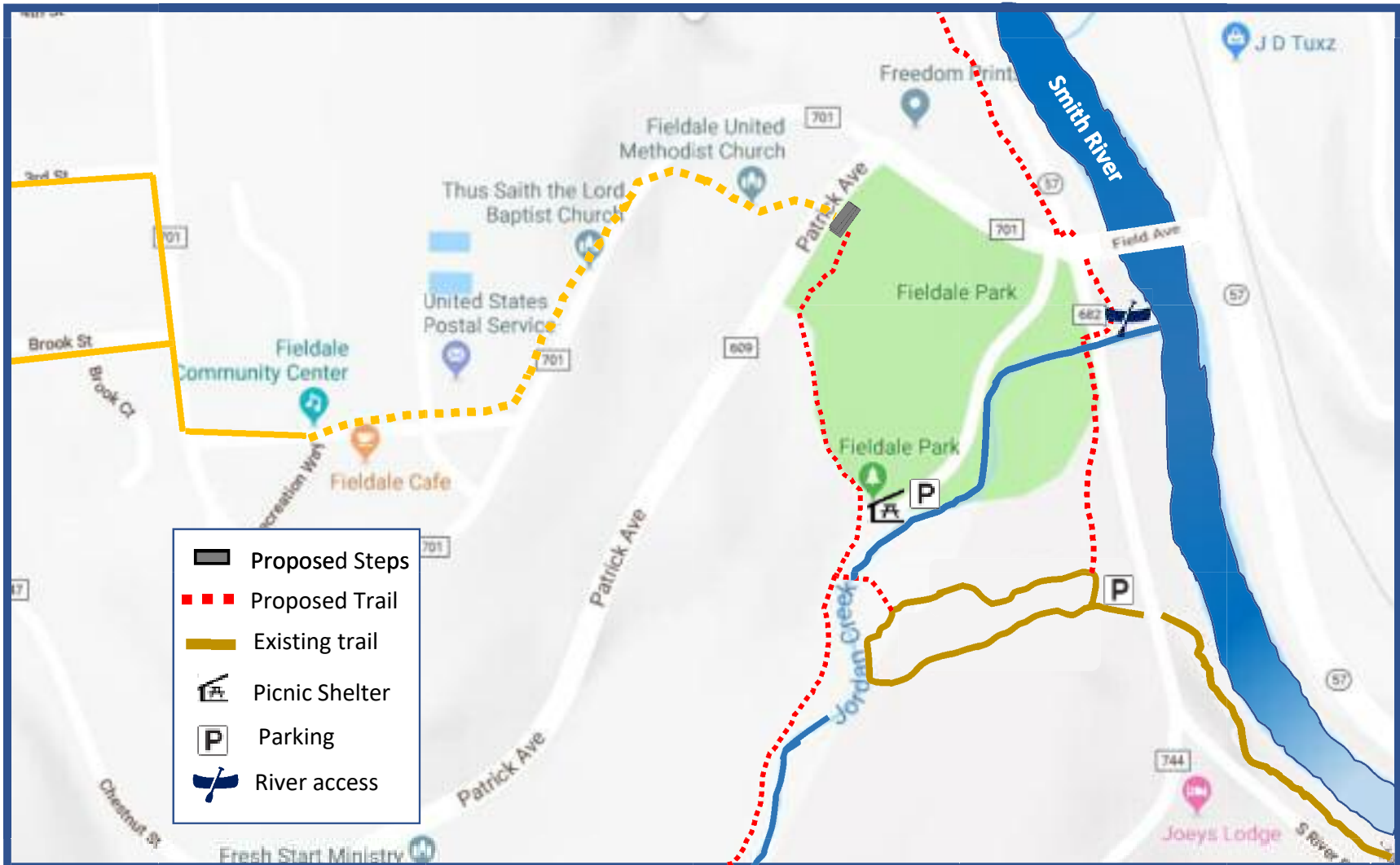
**Issues to Consider:** Henry County planning and zoning and engineering should be involved in surveying the site and engineering the steps. The Fieldale United Methodist Church should be contacted for possible sidewalk to uptown Fieldale.

separated by Field Avenue, and a crosswalk would need to be installed. It would be beneficial to include flashing lights that would slow traffic and allow pedestrians safe passage across the main street.

The continuation of the trail through the park and to the existing sewer-line easement would also make a connection to the ballfields and playground area at Jordan Creek Park, located upstream along Jordan Creek.



Some critical lands were donated by Mr. Raburn French that would allow the trail connection along the creek between the parks and connect the far southern end of the town to the trail. Some additional easements may be acquired that would facilitate further connections.



### Fieldale Connector Trail and Steps

Proposed connection from Main street Urban Loop Trail to Fieldale Park and Fieldale Trail extensions



## Doe Run - Marshland Trail

Doe Run Park off Dupont Road is owned by Henry County. A 30-acre parcel on the north side of the road contains Doe Run Creek, a small pond, trails, parking lot and picnic area. A 16-acre parcel on the south side of the road contains a river access and parking lot. The property is adjacent to the old Dupont plant site that once was a thriving nylon factory. In the excellent birding habitat, waterfowl and a variety of songbirds utilize both sides of Dupont Road. Eagles and Osprey are not uncommon along this section of open water.



A proposed trail would utilize the existing sewer-line easement to take hikers / birders along one of the Smith River's only marshland areas. This area is rich in wildlife, especially waterfowl. A gravel base path already exists due to the repairs on the sewer-line. Directional and interpretive signage could quickly complete the project.

The trail would follow the existing sewer-line easement which recently was replaced and currently has a gravel base that creates a walkable path the length of the easement from Doe Run Creek to Dupont Road, running along the edge of a marshy area. The marshland is created by the back waters of the Smith River behind Martinsville Dam.



The once thriving nylon industry of Dupont is an important part of the rich textile history of the region, and interpretive signage could help tell the story. The EDC Tourism division could assist in funding signage related to the textile industry, as it did with the Textile Heritage Trail. In addition, the importance of wetlands could be part of interpretive signage along the trail.

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** Dupont Rd (GPS: 36.669470, -79.887460)

**Trail Length(s):** Potential for ½ mile of trail along the Smith River and Doe Run Creek.

**Type:** Walking / birding

**Proposed Timeline:** The trail is “shovel ready” and can be immediately utilized. Currently the surface is a base layer of gravel that is walkable. Signage and easements may be needed to continue upstream.

**Potential Partners:** Henry County, DRBA

**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, local area foundations, In-kind donations

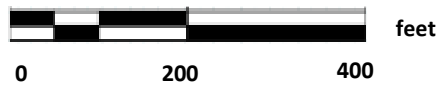
**Issues to Consider:** The proposed trail would be along an existing sewer line where an additional easement may be needed. A crosswalk could connect to existing trails at Doe Run Park.

The current river access has ample parking, and the access ramp is the final take-out before the Martinsville Dam. It is currently not feasible to portage the Martinsville Dam, so the Doe Run access is important for the continuity of the Smith River Blueway Water Trail.





-  Doe Run Trails (existing)
-  Marshland Trail (proposed)
-  River Access (existing)
-  marshland areas



## Doe Run River Access – Marshland Trail

Proposed trail along Smith River upstream of access ramp



## Smith River Small Towns Collaborative Trail Section #1 - Philpott Lake to North Bassett

The Smith River Small Towns Collaborative is an initiative to bring community leaders around the table, developing a shared vision for placemaking and destination tourism for the small towns of Bassett, Stanleytown, Fieldale and Koehler.

With the Smith River as the common denominator, proposed projects include a continuous trail system along the Smith River and through the towns that would connect Philpott Lake and the communities of Bassett, Stanleytown and Fieldale. The trail would tie in existing parks, river access points, community centers, historic sites and heritage sites.

In February 2013, The Harvest Foundation created the Smith River Small Towns Collaborative – an initiative to bring community leaders around the table to develop a shared vision for placemaking and destination tourism for the small towns of Bassett, Stanleytown, Fieldale and Koehler, VA. After a series of meetings, the first product of the Collaborative was a map of the “15 Magical Miles” (from Bassett to Koehler), which features annual events, recreation, industrial heritage, historic buildings and sites, and dining, shopping and lodging. Another product was the identification of priorities in two major categories: revitalization/ curb appeal and needed/enhanced amenities. Also discussed were camping area(s), recreation complex, and fairground(s).

The key assets and a shared vision were identified, and the planning stages focused on fine tuning the priorities for implementation through the creation of a master plan. DRBA was contacted to create a plan to connect the communities via a network of trails and events. DRBA’s “Small Towns Collaborative Master Plan For Rivers and Trails” was used as the framework of the “15 Magical Miles” that proposes to connect existing trails, enhance sidewalks, and create venues that would be part of the larger Smith River Trail System.

The proposed routes from Philpott to North Bassett would incorporate roadways and new trails. Some sections of trail would have to utilize existing road right of ways and shoulders. Considerations include obtaining easements, involving property owners in the process, connecting to existing trails, and identifying final destinations. Much of the route could follow the river from the base of Philpott Dam to Philpott Bridge. There are possible routes on both sides of the river.

### At a Glance

**Location(s):** Philpott Dam (GPS 36.780633, -80.026910) Bassett - (GPS 36.767781, -80.001404)

**Trail Length(s):** Potential for 5 miles of trail from Philpott Dam to North Bassett depending on final routes.

**Type:** Multi-use, paved surface and natural surface trails.

**Proposed Timeline:** Can be started immediately on some sections, other routes will need easements and environmental surveys along with preliminary engineering reports.

**Potential Partners:** Henry County, The Small Towns Collaborative, Greater Bassett Area Community Group, local area foundations, VDOT, DRBA

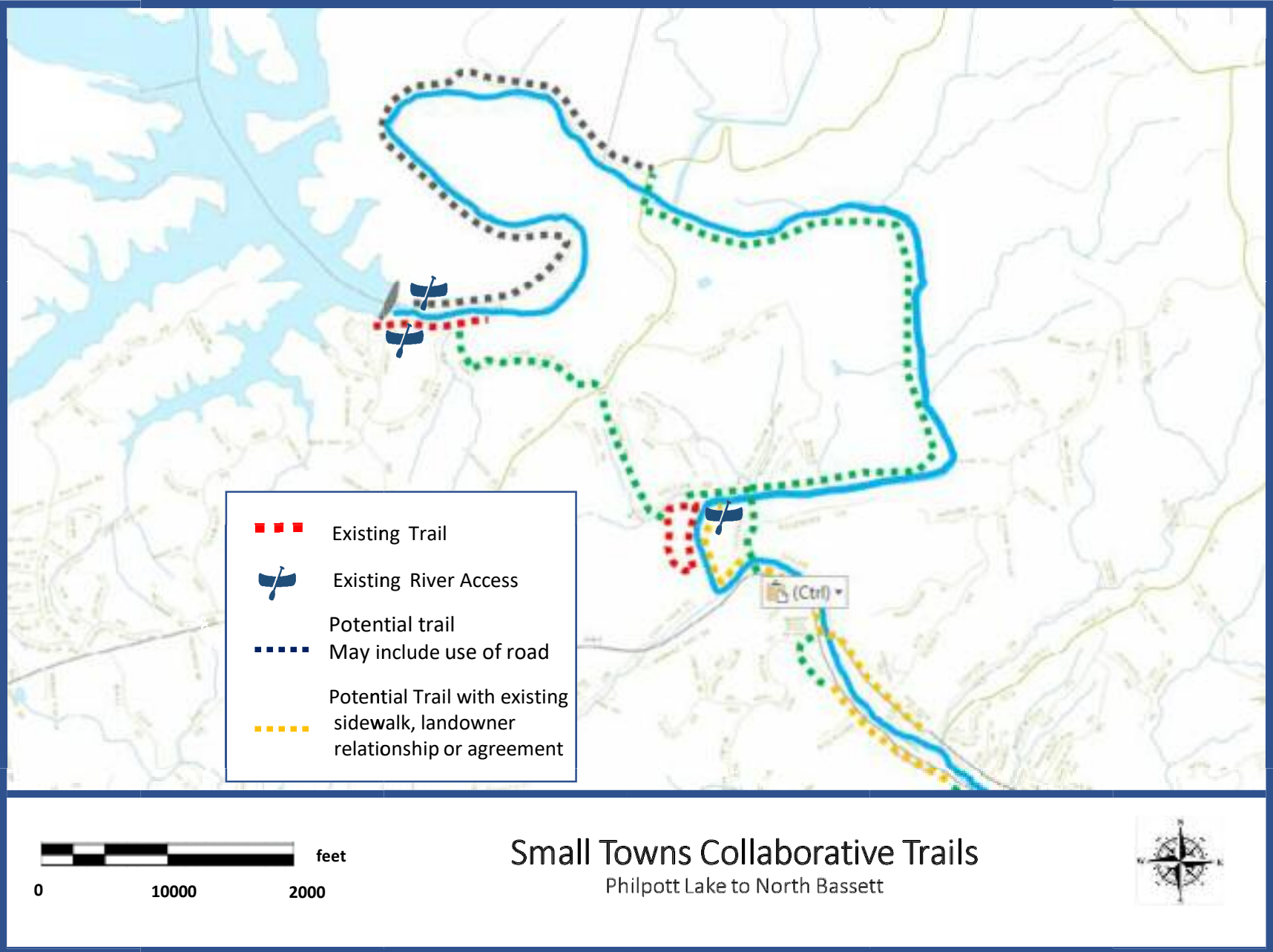
**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, HUD Community Development Block Grant, local area foundations

**Issues to Consider:** The proposed trail(s) will have multiple routes that need to be investigated further. Some sections of trail would have to utilize existing road right of ways and shoulders. Obtaining easements, property owner involvement in process, connectivity to existing trails, and final destination consensus is critical.

A contiguous trail system connecting Philpott to North Bassett would be a marketable bike and hiking route to attract visitors to the area and increase the quality of life for those living in these communities.

Philpott Lake attracts thousands of visitors each year and brings in over a million dollars of revenue to the surrounding counties. Increasing tourism traffic to downstream communities, a trail system connecting Philpott to Bassett would provide potential visitors to the lake with alternatives for recreation. Biking, hiking wildlife viewing, and history can all be included on interpretive signage along the routes. From Philpott Dam to North Bassett there exists the potential for approximately 5 miles of trail.







## Smith River Small Towns Collaborative Trail Section #2 - North Bassett to South Bassett



A large part of this section of the trail will utilize sidewalks and create a Bassett "Loop" that will take users by Papa's Pizza, Bassett Historical Society, the Historic Bassett High School and the Train Depot. An information center with public restrooms is proposed. The use of existing sidewalks would make for simple implementation, requiring signage and curb-appeal projects, without requiring easements.



The trail could continue to South Bassett, adjacent to the river, passing the site of a proposed community green space/riverside park. There is also potential for a riverside campground along this section of the trail.

The proposed routes for North Bassett to South Bassett would include a combination of sidewalks and trails with the emphasis on wayfinding signage. Much of the initial work can be accomplished through the repair and improvement of existing sidewalks while sidewalk extensions could help connect the community routes. Sidewalks should be extended on both sides of the river and bridge, and pedestrian crossings should be surveyed and identified for the best possible routes.

### At a Glance

**Location(s):** North Bassett (GPS 36.767781, -80.001404)South Bassett (GPS: 36.753035, -79.979690)

**Trail Length(s):** Potential for two-mile trail from North Bassett to South Bassett depending on final routes.

**Type:** Multi-use, paved surface and sidewalks

**Proposed Timeline:** Some sections of sidewalks exist and can be incorporated to trail use with the addition of signage. Some easements may be needed, along with funding for improvements.

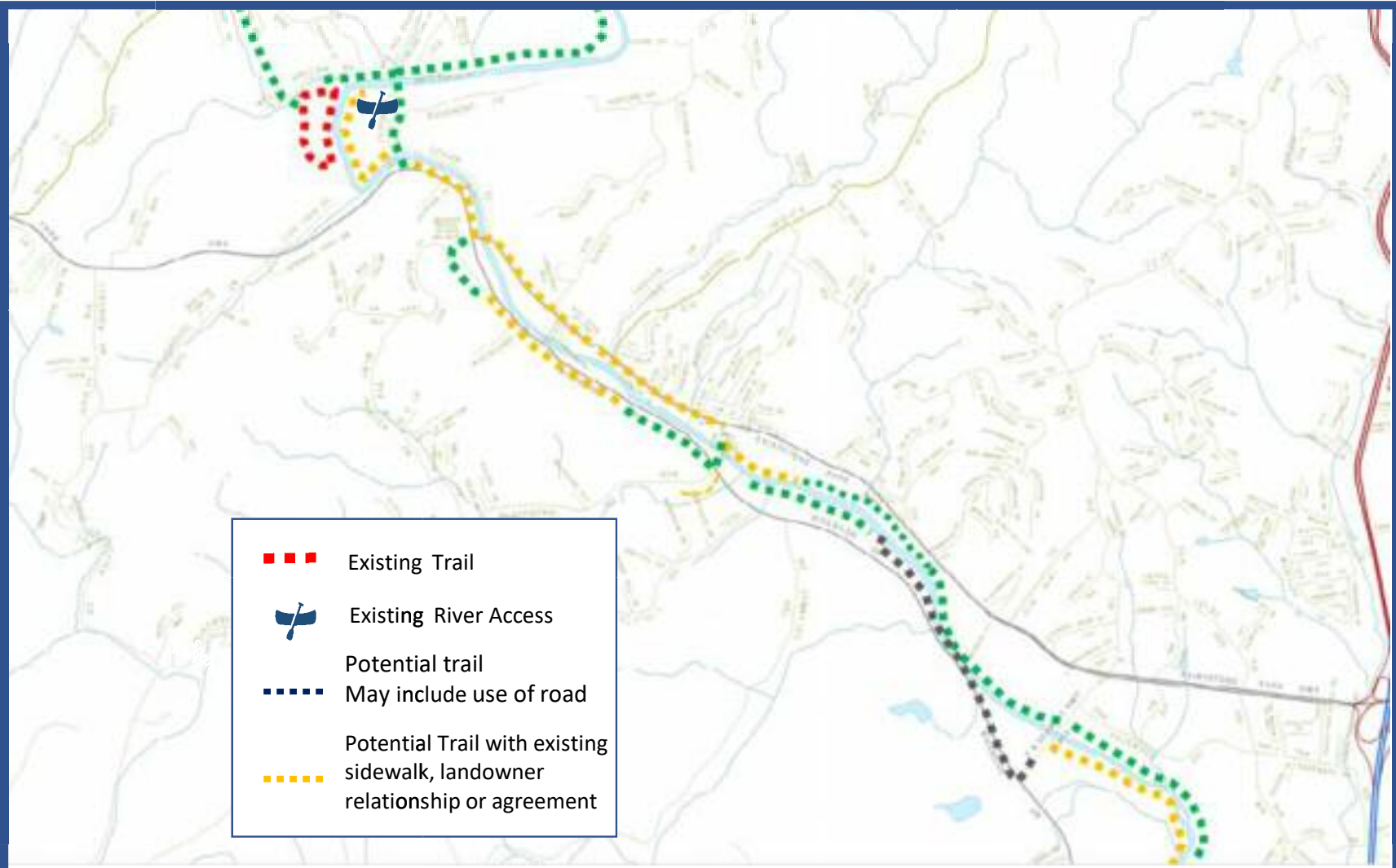
**Potential Partners:** Henry County, The Small Towns Collaborative, Greater Bassett Area Community Group, local area foundations, VDOT, DRBA

**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, HUD Community Development Block Grant, local area foundations

**Issues to Consider:** The proposed routes would include sidewalks, which will need improvement or replacement in some areas. Sidewalks should be extended through to South Bassett on both sides of the river and bridge and pedestrian crossings should be surveyed.

Along the route of the proposed trail there is potential to enhance existing amenities and develop new assets, which would increase the value of the trail and its impact on the community. A contiguous trail system connecting these communities will attract visitors to the area and increase the quality of life for those living in these areas by providing the infrastructure for alternative forms of transportation, such as walking and biking. From the North Bassett river access and proposed trout park to the Bassett Community Center, there exists the potential for approximately 2-miles of trail.





- ■ ■ Existing Trail
- 🚣 Existing River Access
- Potential trail
- May include use of road
- Potential Trail with existing sidewalk, landowner relationship or agreement



## Small Towns Collaborative Trails

North Bassett to South Bassett



## Smith River Small Towns Collaborative Trail Section #3 - South Bassett to Stanleytown



This section of trail will continue to follow the Smith River through Stanleytown, potentially connecting to the Great Road river access and trail. There is a proposed public park or green space along this section of trail.

The proposed route from South Bassett to Stanleytown will include sidewalks, roads and new trails. Sidewalk improvement and wayfinding signage will be much of the initial work. Routes along the Smith River should be utilized if possible; however, there are areas of limited width, making it necessary to use road-side trails delineated with split rail fence. Some improvement and replacement of sidewalks are needed.

Historic sites should be included along routes, and interpretive signage can add to the overall experience for the community and visitors alike. Hordsville Plantation, Hamlet Vineyards, The Great Road Crossing at Wallers Ford, and Stoneleigh are all historic sites that can be promoted along these routes.



### At a Glance

**Location(s):** South Bassett (GPS: 36.753035, -79.979690) Stanleytown (GPS:36.727295, -79.950329)

**Trail Length(s):** Potential for four miles of trail from South Bassett to Stanleytown, depending on final routes.

**Type:** Multi-use, paved surface and sidewalks

**Proposed Timeline:** Some sections of sidewalks exist and can be incorporated to trail use with the addition of signage. Some easements may be needed to continue along river.

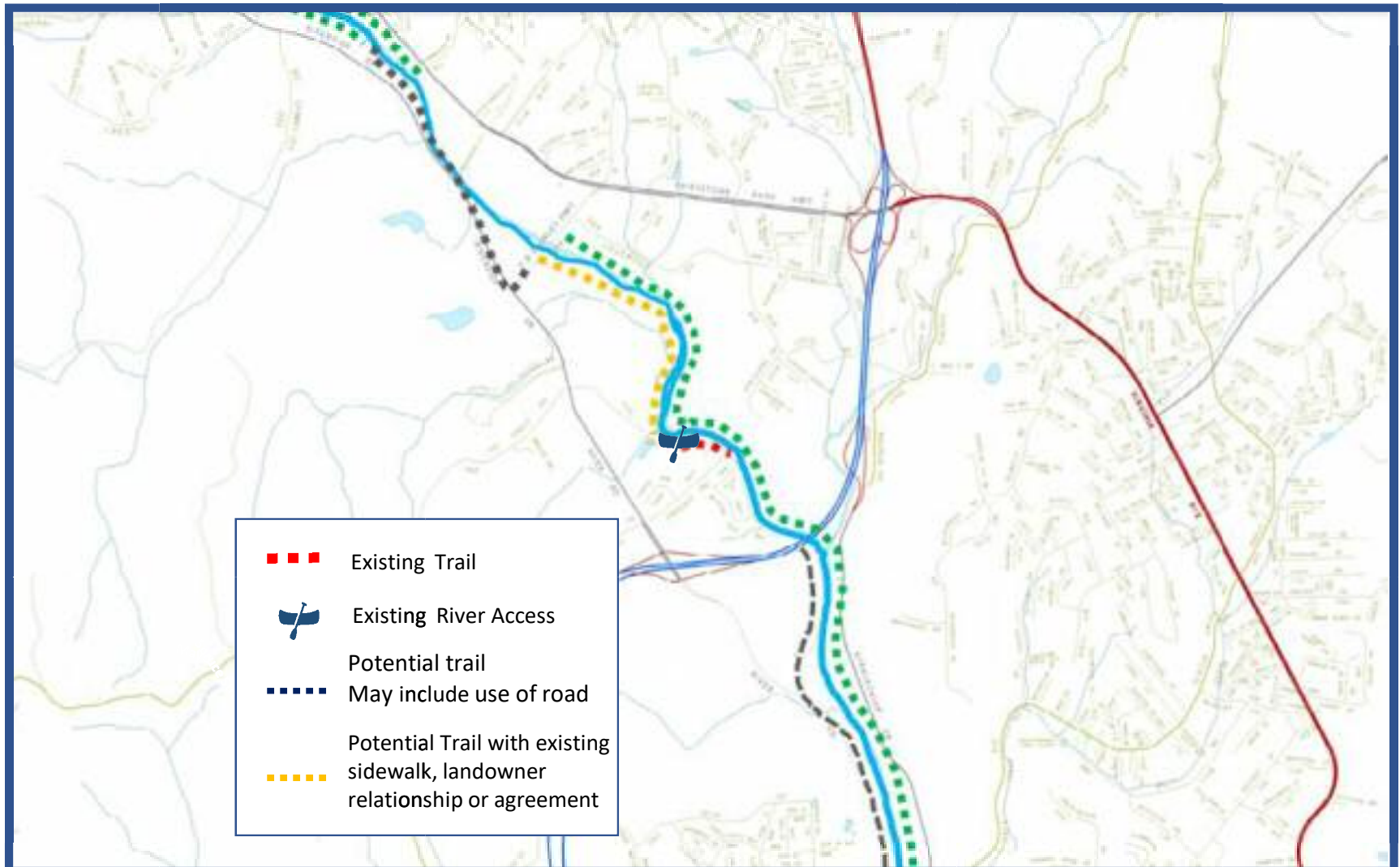
**Potential Partners:** Henry County, The Small Towns Collaborative, Greater Bassett Area Community Group, local area foundations, VDOT, Eastman, DRBA

**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, HUD Community Development Block Grant, local area foundations, Eastman

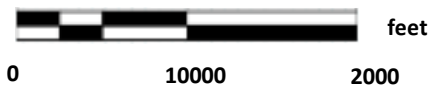
**Issues to Consider:** The proposed routes would include sidewalks that will need improvement or replacement in some areas. Sidewalks should be extended where possible. Trail can go under the Highway 220 bridge with VDOT approval.

Urban trails from nearby communities can utilize roadways to connect to the main stem trail. If possible, trails should be located on both sides of the river, and these routes should be investigated for possible easements. Working with the Small Towns Collaborative group should be a priority to develop relationships with property and business owners.





- ■ ■ Existing Trail
-  Existing River Access
- Potential trail
- - - - May include use of road
- - - - Potential Trail with existing sidewalk, landowner relationship or agreement



## Small Towns Collaborative Trails

South Bassett to Stanleytown



## Smith River Small Towns Collaborative Trail Section #4 - Stanleytown to Fieldale



This section of the trail will connect to the existing Textile Heritage Trail, part of the Fieldale Trail, the Fieldale river access, Fieldale Park, and the Fieldale Community Center.

There several possible routes from Stanleytown to Fieldale that need further investigation which include both sides of the river.

The most direct route will be from the Great Road Access, going under the Highway 220 bridge and following Shady Grove Road downstream to Fieldale.

Henry County owns some of the parcels along this route, but private property owner easements will have to be considered to make the route feasible.

The road-side could be utilized and is more appropriate for bike traffic but with appropriate signage could be part of the route.

There are many historic sites from Stanleytown to Fieldale and these should be included in interpretive signage. Wayfinding should direct users to the Town of Fieldale where urban routes, a community center, shopping and dining are all easily accessible.



### At a Glance

**Location(s):** Stanleytown (GPS:36.727295, -79.950329) Fieldale (GPS:36.699184, -79.938178)

**Trail Length(s):** There is potential for 3 miles of trail connecting Stanleytown to Fieldale, depending on final routes.

**Type:** Multi-use, paved surface and sidewalks

**Proposed Timeline:** Easements and preliminary engineering reports need to be obtained. Some sections of sidewalks exist and can be incorporated to trail use with the addition of signage. Some easements will be needed to continue along river.

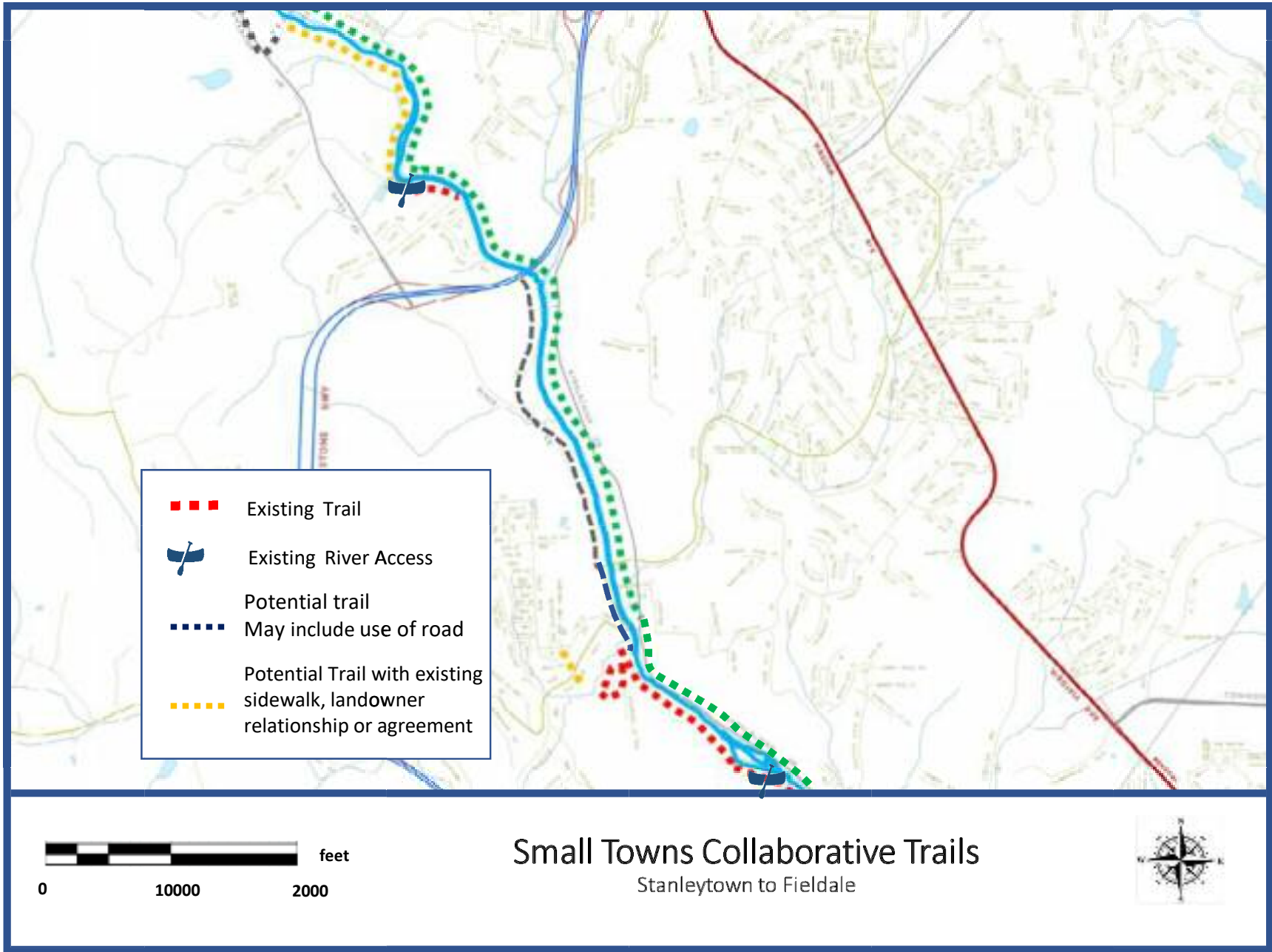
**Potential Partners:** Henry County, The Small Towns Collaborative, Greater Bassett Area Community Group, local area foundations, VDOT, Eastman, DRBA

**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, HUD Community Development Block Grant, local area foundations, Eastman

**Issues to Consider:** The proposed routes would include sidewalks, which will need improvement or replacement in some areas. Sidewalks should be extended where possible. Trail routes along river may need to be along roadways from Shady Grove Road to Fieldale.

Fieldale Park is a key component in the route, connecting the river with the town and beyond. Any proposed route will have to cross over or under Highway 220, with under at the end of Shady View Road being the best option. The connection of Stanleytown and Fieldale should be a priority as it will further solidify the objectives outlined in the Small Towns Collaborative. The entire route from Philpott to Fieldale would be a destination and a marketable draw for tourism.





## Mayo River State Park

The North and South Mayo Rivers rise from the slopes of Bull Mountain on the eastern face of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Patrick County before entering the western portion of Henry County. The North and South Mayo Rivers flow generally southeast and traverse the southwestern section of Henry County before converging to form the Mayo River about 1/4 mile south of the Virginia – North Carolina state line.

The Mayo River then flows roughly 16 miles south to just below the town of Mayodan in Rockingham County before joining the Dan River. A Class III rapid on the upper section offers a challenging run as paddlers dodge large rocks dotting the rushing waters. As the river’s descent becomes more gradual, the float becomes a more leisurely paced and scenic journey with just a hint here and there of faster moving water. Paddlers need to exit the river north of Mayodan at the Highway 220 Business bridge.

Two hydroelectric dams and their canals located below the bridge prevent paddlers from completing the entire run as there is no safe portage. These dams were originally built to generate power for two cotton mills—Mayo Mills in Mayodan (later Washington Mills) and Avalon Mills.

Both mills were established in the 1890s by Colonel Frances Fries of nearby Winston-Salem. Colonel Fries and his partners, including Washington Duke of the Duke tobacco empire, envisioned hydroelectric possibilities for their textile business venture due to the natural fall line of the river. They were also responsible for building a railroad along the river’s bank. The dams and rail line are still in use today. Several well-preserved fish weirs (fish traps) built by American Indians can be spotted while paddling the Mayo. Native settlements can be traced back thousands of years. Fragments of tobacco pipes, arrowheads and pottery have been found along the river banks and feeder streams.

A feasibility study was requested by the 2007 General Assembly in House Joint Resolution 709, which directed the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to “...study the feasibility of establishing a state park along the South Mayo and North Mayo Rivers in Henry County.” The Department also examined the feasibility and advantages of designating the South Mayo and North Mayo rivers as scenic rivers under the Scenic Rivers Act (§ 10.1-400 et.seq. of the Code of Virginia). During the course of this study, the DCR staff coordinated with the Henry County Administrator, members of the Henry County Board of Supervisors that represent the western portion of the county, and other local officials.

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.548480, -79.9943186

**Trail Length(s):** 500 + acres at the confluence of the North and South Mayo Rivers. Proposed state park would have multiple trails and river access.

**Type:** State Park / VA and NC border park

**Proposed Timeline:** Property has been purchased. Potential to open some of park grounds when management/funding of park is determined

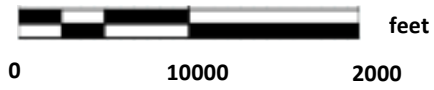
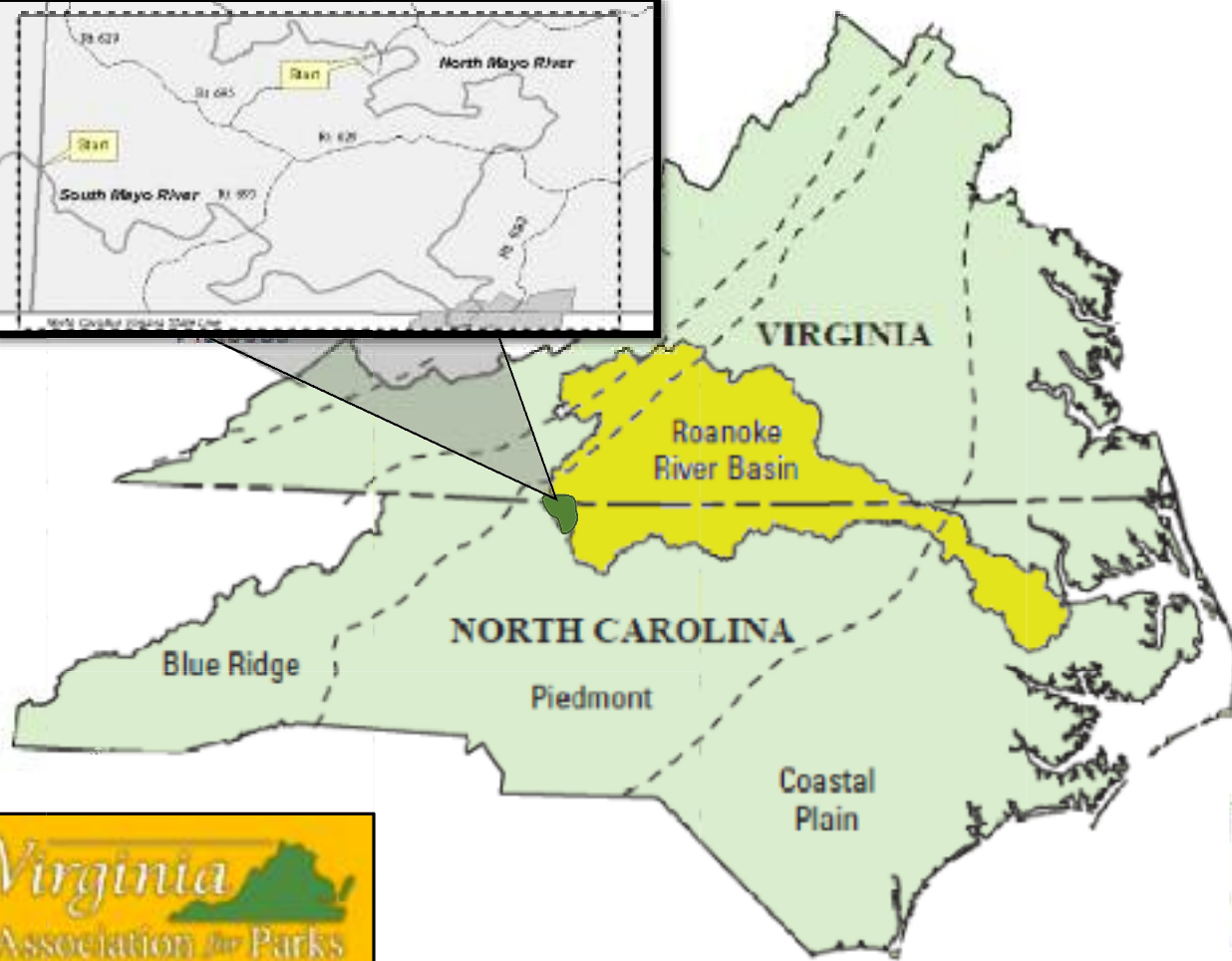
**Potential Partners:** Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Henry County Parks and Recreation, North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation, North Carolina Recreation and Park Association, DRBA.

**Funding Opportunities:** Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Henry County Parks and Recreation, North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation, North Carolina Recreation and Park Association, Stokes County, NC.

**Issues to Consider:** North Carolina has already completed much of its project for this bi-state park and is open to the public. Funding for the VA portion of the parks is not currently available. Potentially the park could be open to hiking and paddling for day use if DCR could reach partnership agreement with Henry County or DRBA.

In 2007, DCR staff met with local landowners to answer questions and describe the process for the feasibility study. Other Virginia state agencies have also provided valuable information about cultural, historic, and natural resources in the study area. In addition, DCR staff, in cooperation with the Henry County Administrator and the Horsepasture District Supervisor, participated in an open house/public meeting. DRBA hosted the field investigations, provided resource information and identified landowners in the study area. DCR staff were then able to contact these landowners by mail before the study process started. Volunteers from DRBA provided canoes for the river evaluations, served as guides, and shared a wealth of information about the area’s historic and natural resources.

During the next five years, efforts were focused on potential acquisitions that would expand Middle Peninsula and Mayo River State Park sites so that these sites meet the identified desired acreage, and opportunities to acquire in-holdings and land adjacent to existing state park sites. To date, DCR has acquired 300+ acres at the confluence of the North and South Mayo rivers with intentions of creating a full-service park at some point in the future. DRBA has hosted hikes on the property for many Virginia legislators and has created a draft plan for development and maintenance of the future park.



## Mayo River State Park – Virginia and North Carolina

Proposed Virginia State Park connects with current North Carolina State Park





## Bassett Trout Park

Bassett was once the largest manufacturer of furniture in the world, but today many of its factories and warehouses sit idle, unused, unkempt, and decaying, waiting for nature to reclaim them. Where the residents of Bassett may only see these old buildings as tombstones of the once prosperous town, there is much to be admired in the history of Bassett, Virginia.

The Bassett Trout Park is a project idea developed in partnership with DRBA and Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture graduate Miles J. Rachner. Adaptive re-use of these post-industrial factory sites is appealing in scope due to the rich cultural and ecological significance and importance in the history of the Town of Bassett and Henry County.

The purpose of this project is to create a resilient community on a ecological, social and economic level. This park has a complex and unique combination of different elements and aims to give visitors a chance to choose their own experience. A secondary goal is to connect this park to the community of Bassett and the surrounding area. Lastly, this park aims to create a catalyst to promote economic redevelopment in Bassett. Multiple phases were created to guide the project and can be modified as funding and public input are available.

### Heritage Trail

The Heritage Trail is one of the key components to this park. This trail will be highlighted by a metal rail inlaid into the pathway, similar to railroad tracks, which highlights the role of trains in connecting Bassett to the rest of the world. This metal rail leads visitors to significant landmarks and park elements that deal with the industrial past of this site. Each main intersection of the trail will have a point of interest that tells visitors about the project and a map to where the trail will lead. While the first phase of the project does little with the existing factory buildings, the later phases will introduce new parts of the Heritage Trail that include inside and on top of the buildings. This trail will be a closed loop that focuses on this site alone, but should further reclamation of other industrial sites occur, it will be possible to connect to other assets.

### Eco-Trail

The very reason Bassett exists in this location is because of its environment and the natural resources that allowed it to thrive. Similar to the Heritage Trail, the Eco-Trail will lead visitors to important parts of the site that highlight aspects of the local ecosystem. Unlike the Heritage Trail, this trail connects to the surrounding trail systems, such as the Lauren Mountain Preserve Trail and the proposed 15 Magical Miles trail system. A rope bridge could be used to connect the trails in the park to the Lauren Mountain Preserve Trail. In Bassett's industrial youth, similar rope bridges were used by factory workers to cross the Smith River, enabling them to move between their homes and the furniture plants with relative ease.

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.770077, -80.002181, Trent Hill Road, Bassett, VA 24055

**Trail Length(s):** This "destination park" would include a riverside trail approximately 0.6 miles long

**Type:** Destination Riverside Park, adaptive reuse of old industrial sites

**Proposed Timeline: Contingent on funding.** This is a long-term project designed to be implemented in several phases over multiple years

**Potential Partners:** Henry County - Parks and Recreation, Economic Development and Tourism, Small Towns Collaborative, Virginia Department of Housing and Urban Development, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, local area foundations, DRBA

**Funding Opportunities:** Virginia Department of Housing and Urban Development, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Henry County, EDC, local area foundations

**Issues to Consider:** The site is currently home to one of the more popular river access locations and has been home to the Trout in the Classroom Program for many years. Incorporating river use and access along with water quality and education should be a focus while developing this concept. This is an old industrial site and will need environmental assessment.

### Eco-Learning Center

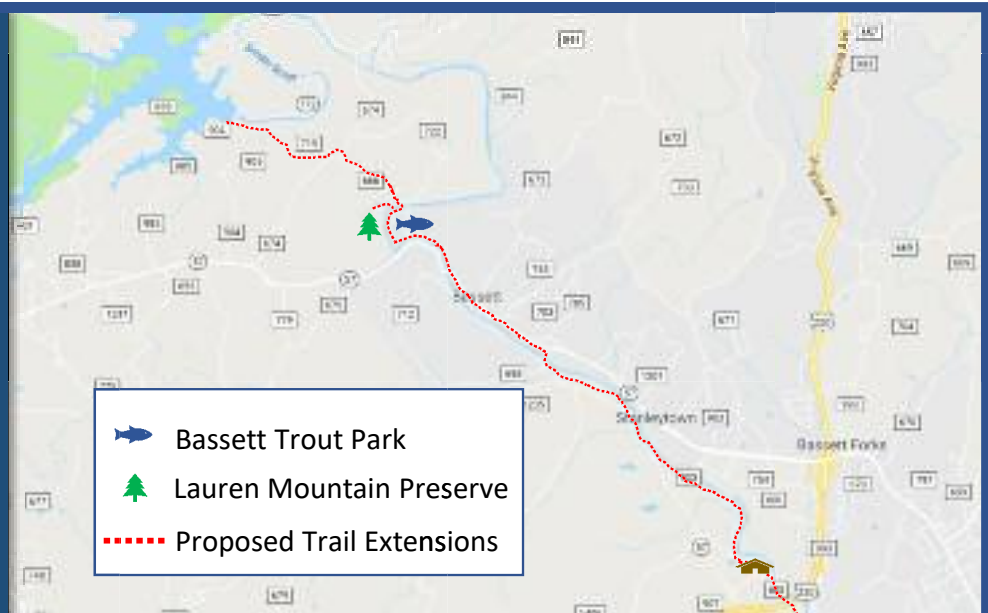
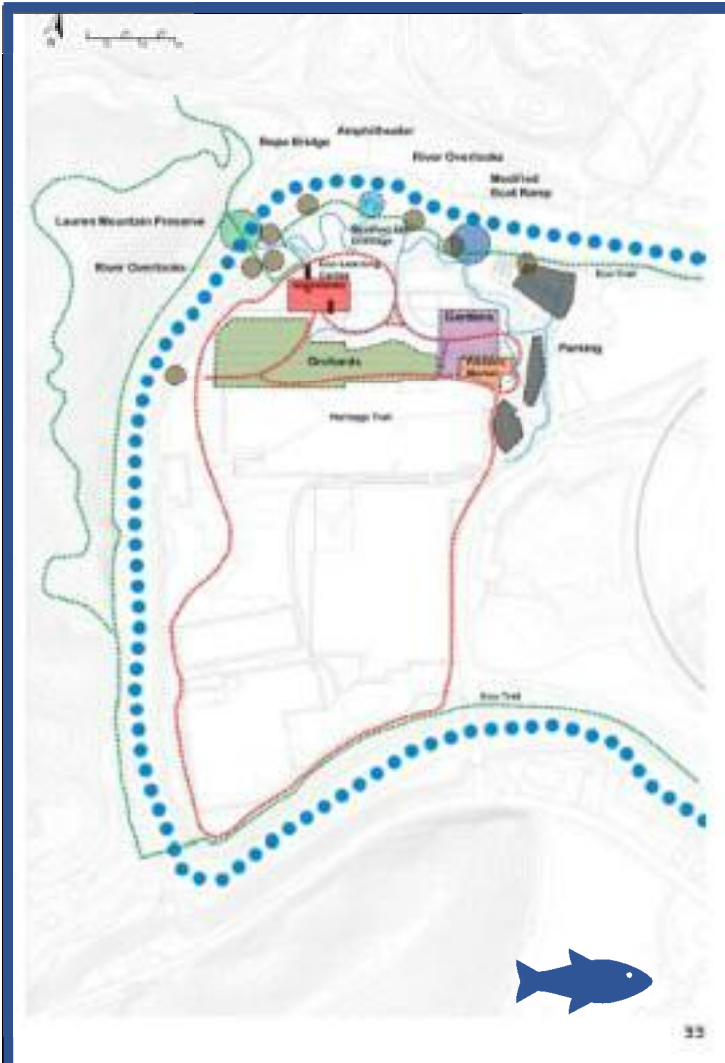
The Eco-Learning Center is a project that the local community initiated to support programs such as Trout in the Classroom. Another primary purpose of this building is a welcome center for the park and the proposed 15 Magical Miles trail system connecting to it. The Eco-Learning Center is designed to house space for each of the educational areas: 1) Heritage, 2) Ecosystem, and 3) Agriculture. The building could house classrooms and office space for employees who would oversee the different activities and programs on the site.

### River Overlooks

A major challenge to this site is that the river's banks are steep and covered in dense vegetation. This does not allow people to view or access the river safely. The solution may be the creation of river overlooks that are spotted along the Eco-trail. This solution would also keep the majority of vegetation along the river edge intact for bank stabilization.

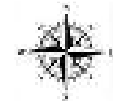
### Community Gardens

Community-driven vegetable gardens would give the local community the opportunity to grow or buy fresh produce locally. These garden plots can differ in size and quantity from the ones shown in the image to the right, depending on interest. Any leftover plots could be managed by the Eco-Learning Center and used as an educational opportunity. These gardens would grant a new purpose to this site and promote education, community engagement and healthier living.



## Bassett Trout Park - Adaptive Reuse Project

Outdoor classroom, trails, river access, aquaponics



Maps and drawings Courtesy of Mile J. Rachner

## Smith River Blueway

**Water trails are recreational routes on waterways with a network of public access points supported by broad-based community partnerships. Water trails provide both conservation and recreational opportunities.**

From the base of Philpott Dam to the North Carolina state line, the Smith River is a natural corridor serving as an existing trail for non-motorized watercraft including canoes, kayaks and other paddle craft. A total of eleven (11) river access points currently exist along the Smith River in Virginia, and each of these locations garners continuous and heavy use by paddlers and fishermen alike. The river is a water trail, and a Blueway project is underway to create a map and informational signs to promote its use.

A Blueway is generally defined as a marked trail on a body of water, usually a lake or an ocean. The term Water Trail is used to denote a defined route along a river. However, these terms are often used synonymously by the general public, with Blueway being the most recognizable and marketable. While creating the idea of a water trail on the Smith River, both terms were suggested, and Smith River Blueway was settled on as the project name. To date, the term Blueway has been used in marketing, logos and signage. It is suggested that in future marketing, the term water trail be added to gain a wider audience, as this term is used by the National Water Trails System. Application to the National Water Trails system is suggested once the Smith River Blueway Project is completed.

The 11 river access locations along the Smith through Henry County were installed beginning in 2006 at a cost of approximately \$8,000 for each ramp. DRBA initiated and conceived of these access sites, and Henry County allocated funding for some of the access points and others were created by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on Federal property at the base of Philpott Dam. In 2009, DRBA, funded by the Harvest Foundation, developed and printed the Insiders Guide to the Smith River. This unique, waterproof paddler's guide was the first promotional piece focused on the Smith River and was quickly utilized by Henry County and the tourism department of the EDC to promote the area to potential investors and visitors.

Currently, DRBA is working closely with Henry County Parks and Recreation to develop the Smith River Blueway. The river access locations were a key component to the development of the Blueway and were constructed under the 2008 Master Plan guidelines. Additional river access locations and infrastructure have been developed and installed to facilitate ease of use for residents and visitors. It became evident with the increase in usage of the river that the development of a Blueway water trail would be necessary to maintain and increase visitation in a safe and enjoyable environment.

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.780576, -80.025937 (Philpott Tailrace) 36.480894, -79.749894 (confluence with Dan River, Eden, NC)

**Trail Length(s):** Proposed Blueway from Philpott to confluence with Dan River is 44.5 miles.

**Type:** Paddle Trail

**Proposed Timeline:** Signage and maps are in progress. Projected completion date Summer, 2019.

**Potential Partners:** City of Martinsville, Henry County Parks and Recreation, Philpott Lake Rangers and USACE, local paddling clubs, local outfitters, DRBA

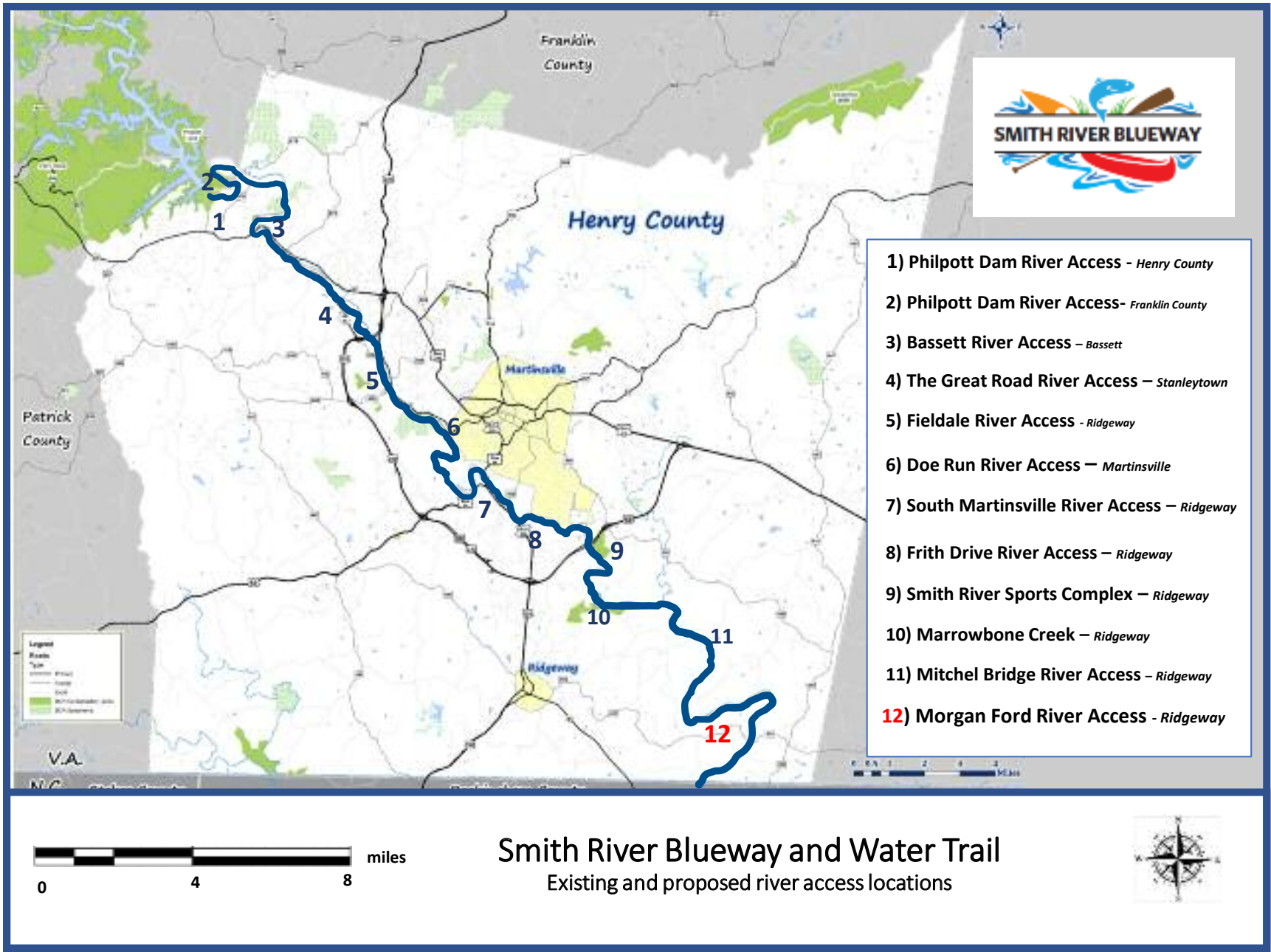
**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, City of Martinsville, USACE, local area foundations, City of Eden, Rockingham County, in-kind donation of labor, DCR grants

**Issues to Consider:** Paddling and fishing are the main attractions to the Smith River and having information related to access and maps is critical to attracting visitors and users. Currently there are 12 river access locations. Additional access points are needed at Morgan Ford and the North Carolina line. Potential for camping sites should be explored. Possible inclusion on National Water Trails through the Department of the Interior should be explored.

To date, a Blueway logo has been developed and signage installed with additional signage completed to be installed at all 11 river access locations. An interactive map on the DRBA website provides information about river access, travel times and safety.

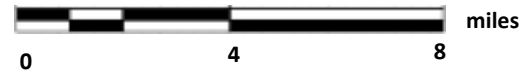
Over the years, a variety of local, state, and federal organizations have identified and developed numerous water trails on rivers, lakes, and other waterways throughout the United States. The National Water Trails System (NWTs) serves to bring existing and newly identified water trails together into one cohesive national network of exemplary water trails the public can explore and enjoy.





- 1) Philpott Dam River Access - Henry County
- 2) Philpott Dam River Access- Franklin County
- 3) Bassett River Access - Bassett
- 4) The Great Road River Access - Stanleystown
- 5) Fieldale River Access - Ridgeway
- 6) Doe Run River Access - Martinsville
- 7) South Martinsville River Access - Ridgeway
- 8) Frith Drive River Access - Ridgeway
- 9) Smith River Sports Complex - Ridgeway
- 10) Marrowbone Creek - Ridgeway
- 11) Mitchel Bridge River Access - Ridgeway
- 12) Morgan Ford River Access - Ridgeway

**Smith River Blueway and Water Trail**  
Existing and proposed river access locations



## Morgan Ford River Access and Trail

**The last major access needed on the Smith River in Henry County is near the North Carolina Line at Morgan Ford. The site of a historic iron bridge, this access would be 7 miles downstream from Mitchell Bridge and help complete the Smith River Blueway Water Trail.**

The Morgan Ford Bridge location has a history of neglect and abuse. However, landowner relations, community involvement and clean-ups through partnerships with DRBA have addressed many issues that negatively impacted the area.

In 2012, a clean-up yielded 15 tons of trash removed at the site and a joint agreement with landowners allowed a cable to gate off the access road that leads to the access. These efforts have resulted in blocking the illegal dumping. Combined with community awareness, the area is no longer plagued with litter and trash.



A river access at the Morgan Ford bridge is needed to allow paddlers a final access location above the North Carolina line. The access would be approximately 7 miles downstream from the Mitchell bridge access and would become part of the Smith River Blueway. This would be an important take-out for paddlers and fishermen in Henry County. As a put-in location this would allow paddle trips to begin in Virginia and end in North Carolina, crossing the border at the rock formation known as Devils

## At a Glance

**Location(s):** GPS: 36.558772, -79.7463696., 5508 Morgan Ford Rd, Ridgeway, VA 2414850

**Trail Length(s):** This project is primarily a river access; however, the property is 30 acres and the owner is open to trails on the property.

**Type:** River Access

**Proposed Timeline:** Start date contingent on funding. Construction could be completed in approximately 4 months after start.

**Potential Partners:** Henry County Parks and Recreation, Economic Development and Tourism, DRBA

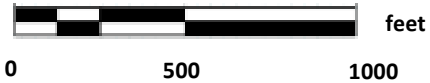
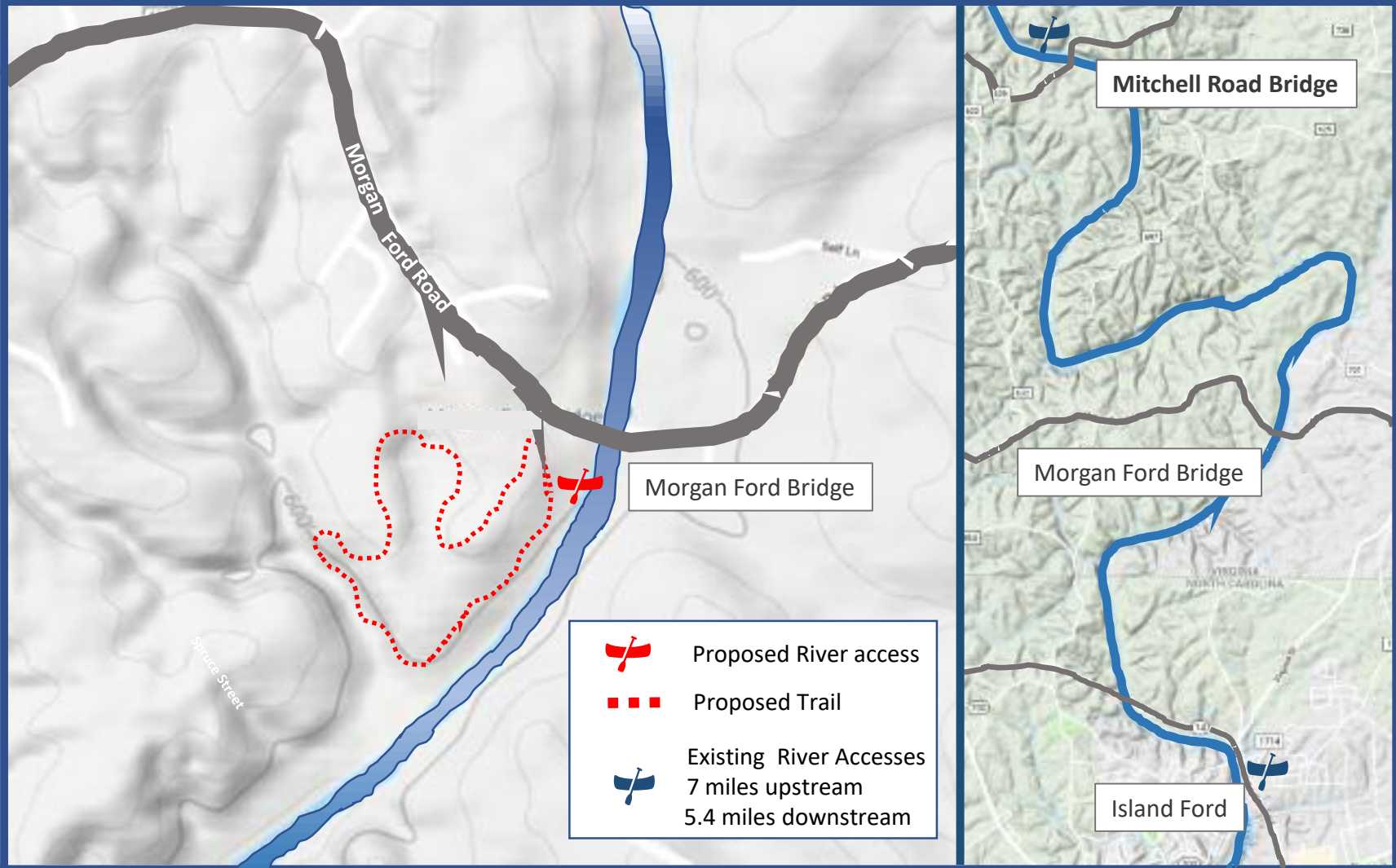
**Funding Opportunities:** Henry County, Virginia Department Game and Inland Fisheries, local area foundations

**Issues to Consider:** Ingress and egress to site will need road and culvert. Will need to consult VDOT on exact location of driveway. Limited sight distance.

Den, surveyed by William Byrd in 1728. Additionally, the existing iron bridge is the last remaining structure of its kind across the Smith River. Upstream of this bridge sit the historic stone pilings from the original road crossing of the 1800's. These historical points of interest add an interesting marketing component and strategy for the Smith River Blueway.

A 30-acre tract of land bordering the Smith River on the southeast quadrant at Morgan Ford is owned by Dr. David Jones. Dr Jones is willing to allow an easement for a river access and possible trail. The map of the location was provided to VDOT in 2013 for evaluation and concerns for site distance were expressed. Additionally, a drainage along the road would need to be bridged with a large culvert to allow ingress and egress to the site. Currently, paddlers and fishermen must park alongside the road.





# Improvements & Additions

## TRAILS

### The Fieldale Trail

3512 River Road, Fieldale

Extend the current 2.6-mile trail in both directions. Connection to Textile trail exists. Expand Textile Trail up Jordan Creek to connect to community of Fieldale.

### The Dick & Willie Trail

Multiple locations

Extend D&W in both directions - Currently in process work on 6B, Spruce Street to Smith River Sports Complex. 6A will make the connection to the original 4.5-mile section of the trail.

### Gravelly Nature Preserve Trails

2525 Egelston Falls Rd, Ridgeway

Replace kiosk signage. Rework trail signs, add interpretive signage.

### Smith River Paw Path, Smith River Sports Complex

1000 Irisburg Road, Axton

Connect to Dick and Willie. Add plantings and dog park equipment. Possible pet watering station.

### Textile Heritage Trail

2500 River Road, Fieldale

Extend trail across Jordan Creek via bridge to connect to Fieldale park. Extend trail to Fieldale community via connection at Jordan Park and sidewalks. Add signage from Fieldale.

### PHCC Loop Trail

645 Patriot Ave, Martinsville

Extend trail around entire lakeshore and connect with Rock Ridge trail and public boat ramp.

### Rock Ridge Trail

600 Redskin Dr, Martinsville

Extend trail around entire lakeshore and connect to PHCC Loop

### Doe Run Trail

198 DuPont Rd, Martinsville

Rework trail signage. Add interpretive signs for water quality monitoring station at creek.

### Lauren Mountain Preserve Trail

Wells Hollow Road, Bassett

Addition of benches, picnic tables, interpretive signage. Possible Boy Scout projects. Extend trail along creek and upstream along river to bridge. This would be a connector to the Bassett Access ramp.

### The Great Road River Access Trail

4313 The Great Rd, Fieldale

Possible addition of handicap access deck at parking area across from Eastman entrance gate. Add trail along river upstream to deck.

### J. Frank Wilson Park Trails

1560 East Church Street Extension, Martinsville

Additional trails and road signage allowing for directional connection to the Silver Bell Trail and the Dick and Willie Passage.

### The Silver Bell Trail

503 East Church Street

Connection to VMNH, YMCA and Frank Wilson Park Neighborhood via sidewalk signage.

### Uptown Connection Spur Trail

101 Depot Street, Martinsville

Restroom signage visible from all sides.

### Philpott Lake Interpretive Fitness Trail

1058 Philpott Dam Rd., Bassett, VA

Add trail extension to Philpott marina.

### Spencer Penn Centre

475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer

Signage/kiosk - trail extension to North Mayo River.

## PRESERVES

### Gravelly Nature Preserve

2525 Egelston Falls Road, Ridgeway

Signage re-work, trail directional signage.

### Lauren Mountain Preserve

415 Wells Hollow Road, Bassett

Addition of benches, picnic tables, interpretive signage. Possible Boy Scout projects. Extend trail along creek and upstream along river to bridge. This would be a connector to the Bassett Access ramp.



## PARKS / BALLFIELDS

### Smith River Sports Complex

Improve access ramp. Connect to Dick and Willie Passage Trail.

### Jack Dalton Park

possible additional trail.

### Collinsville Jaycee Park

Trail improvements

### Fieldale Park

Extend trail to Jordan Park. Add water quality interpretive signage along Jordan Creek.

### Jordan Creek Park

Water quality protection interpretive signage along Jordan Creek. Potential for trail.

### Doe Run Park

Water quality protection interpretive signage- CWQM monitoring area.

### Mt Olivet Ruritan Field

Possible short trail around ballfield.

### Horse Pasture Ruritan

Possible short trail around ballfield.

### Samuel Hairston

Possible short trail around ballfield.

### Figsboro Fields

Possible short trail around ballfield.

### Blackberry Park

Possible short trail around ballfield.

### Drewry Mason Fields

Possible short trail around ballfield.

### Chatham Park

Additional trails.

### Fisher Farm Park

Possible trail to Marrowbone Creek. Water quality protection interpretive signage.



## RIVER ACCESS

\*Signage needed on main roads directing public to all river accesses

### Philpott Dam River Access

Re-work access on Franklin County side. Rough, rocky slope to river needs to be graded.

### Bassett River Access

Add river information sign- Smith River Blueway.

### Smith River Outfitters River Access

Need Henry County easment- discuss with landowners. Add river information sign- Smith River Blueway.

### The Great Road River Access

Add river information sign- Smith River Blueway.

### The Fieldale River Access

Re-work steps. Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway.

### Doe Run River Access

303 DuPont Rd, Martinsville

Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway.

### South Martinsville River Access

Add river information sign- Smith River Blueway. Improve grade with switchback and possible metal grate launch deck. Improve or expand parking area.

### Frith Drive River Access

Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway. Metal steps to replace wooden crossties.

### Smith River Sports Complex River Access

Improve ramp with additional steps.

### Marrowbone Creek River Access

Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway. Improve steps to metal grate with wooden canoe launch chute.

### Mitchell Bridge River Access

Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway. Improve grade to river via switchbacks, possible metal grate landing at river's edge.





# Summary of Projects

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<b>Dick &amp; Willie Passage Rail Trail</b>	Proposed Timeline: 6B, projected completion Spring 2019. 6A proposed, projected start date 2020 Potential Partners: Henry County, local area foundations, VDOT, DRBA Funding Opportunities: Henry County, local area foundations, VDOT T-Bills Issues to Consider: Extending trail in both directions from current ends, obtaining new easements, surrounding property owner involvement
<b>Lanier Farms Connector Trail</b>	Proposed Timeline: Sewer-line easement is ready for trail prep. After funding acquired, estimated completion of construction is 6 months Potential Partners: Martinsville City, Forrest Park Country Club, Henry County, local area foundations, DRBA Funding Opportunities: Martinsville City, Henry County, local area foundations, other grants should be investigated for Urban trail connections Issues to Consider: Obtaining new easements, surrounding property owner involvement in process
<b>Jones Creek Connector Trail and Pond Loop</b>	Proposed Timeline: Easements and funding to be obtained by 2020. Estimated completion of construction, 6 months. Potential Partners: Martinsville City, SOVA Memorial Hospital, Martinsville High School, local area foundations, DRBA Funding Opportunities: SOVA Memorial Hospital, Martinsville City, local area foundations, health foundations Issues to Consider: Obtaining new easements (Lester Corporation, SOVA, MHS), surrounding property owner involvement in process
<b>Fisher Farm Park / Marrowbone Creek Trails</b>	Proposed Timeline: Start date dependent on Henry County work schedule, possibly Fall, 2019. Estimated completion - 4 months. Potential Partners: Henry County Parks and Recreation, DRBA, local bike and hiking clubs, Eagle Scout projects, trail-building class demos Funding Opportunities: Henry County, in-kind donation of labor from local trail builders Issues to Consider: Henry County could do initial grading and volunteers can do hand finishing. Steps, fencing or other barriers needed
<b>Beaver Creek Reservoir Lakeshore Trail</b>	Proposed Timeline: Shovel-ready, start date dependent on funding and partners. Estimated completion, 2 years. Potential Partners: City of Martinsville, Henry County Parks and Recreation, DRBA, local bike and hiking clubs, Eagle Scouts, volunteers. Funding Opportunities: City of Martinsville, local area foundations, in-kind donation of labor Issues to Consider: Determination of starting points for construction; bridges and boardwalks may be needed at low lying areas and coves
<b>Spencer Penn Trail Project</b>	Proposed Timeline: Project could be completed in as little as 3 months. Projected completion date: Summer 2020. Potential Partners: Spencer Penn Centre, Henry County, local area foundations, DRBA Funding Opportunities: Henry County, City of Martinsville, local area foundations, in-kind donation of labor Issues to Consider: Needs public input specifically from Spencer community. Trail design and landowner easements are needed.
<b>Fieldale Connector Trail and Steps</b>	Proposed Timeline: Start date contingent on funding; construction could be completed in less than 2 months . Potential Partners: Henry County, EDC, Virginia Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fieldale United Methodist, DRBA Funding Opportunities: Virginia Department of Housing and Urban Development, Henry County, EDC, local area foundations Issues to Consider: Survey needed. The Fieldale United Methodist Church should be contacted for possible sidewalk to uptown Fieldale.
<b>Doe Run - Marshland Trail</b>	Proposed Timeline: The trail is “shovel ready” and can be immediately utilized. Currently the surface is a base layer of gravel that is walkable. Signage and easements may be needed to continue upstream. Potential Partners: Henry County, DRBA Funding Opportunities: Henry County, local area foundations, In-kind donations Issues to Consider: The proposed trail would be along an existing sewer line where an additional easement may be needed. A crosswalk could connect to existing trails at Doe Run Park.

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<b>Smith River Small Towns Collaborative Trail Section #1 - Philpott Lake to North Bassett</b>	<p>Proposed Timeline: Can be started immediately on some sections. Other routes will need easements and preliminary engineering reports.</p> <p>Potential Partners: Henry County, The Small Towns Collaborative, Greater Bassett Area Community Group, local area foundations, VDOT, DRBA</p> <p>Funding Opportunities: Henry County, HUD Community Development Block Grant, local area foundations</p> <p>Issues to Consider: Obtaining easements, property owner outreach, connectivity to existing trails, and final destination consensus are critical.</p>
<b>Smith River Small Towns Collaborative Trail Section #2 - North Bassett to South Bassett</b>	<p>Proposed Timeline: Easements and funding are required before timeline can be determined.</p> <p>Potential Partners: Henry County, Greater Bassett Area Community Group, local area foundations, VDOT, DRBA</p> <p>Funding Opportunities: Henry County, HUD Community Development Block Grant, local area foundations</p> <p>Issues to Consider: Surveying required. Sidewalks should be extended through to South Bassett on both sides of the river and bridge.</p>
<b>Smith River Small Towns Collaborative Trail Section #3 - South Bassett to Stanleytown</b>	<p>Proposed Timeline: Easements and funding are required before timeline can be determined.</p> <p>Potential Partners: Henry County, Greater Bassett Area Community Group, local area foundations, VDOT, Eastman, DRBA</p> <p>Funding Opportunities: Henry County, HUD Community Development Block Grant, local area foundations, Eastman</p> <p>Issues to Consider: The proposed routes would include sidewalks, which will need improvement or replacement in some areas.</p>
<b>Smith River Small Towns Collaborative Trail Section #4 - Stanleytown to Fieldale</b>	<p>Proposed Timeline: Easements and funding are required before timeline can be determined.</p> <p>Potential Partners: Henry County, Greater Bassett Area Community Group, local area foundations, VDOT, Eastman, DRBA</p> <p>Funding Opportunities: Henry County, HUD Community Development Block Grant, local area foundations, Eastman</p> <p>Issues to Consider: Trail routes along river may need to be moved to along roadways from Shady Grove Road to Fieldale.</p>
<b>Mayo River State Park</b>	<p>Proposed Timeline: Property has been purchased. Potential to open some of park grounds when management/funding determined.</p> <p>Potential Partners: DCR, Henry County Parks and Recreation, NC Division of Parks &amp; Recreation, DRBA</p> <p>Funding Opportunities: DCR, Henry County Parks and Recreation, NC Division of Parks &amp; Recreation, NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund</p> <p>Issues to Consider: Funding is not currently available; however park is available to DRBA for special outings.</p>
<b>Bassett Trout Park</b>	<p>Proposed Timeline: Implementation in several phases over multiple years.</p> <p>Potential Partners: Henry County, EDC and Tourism, Small Towns Collaborative, Virginia HUD, DCR, DGIF, local area foundations, DRBA</p> <p>Funding Opportunities: HUD, DCR, Henry County, EDC, local area foundations</p> <p>Issues to Consider: This is an old industrial site and will need environmental assessment.</p>
<b>Smith River Blueway</b>	<p>Proposed Timeline: In progress signage and maps, projected completion date Summer, 2019.</p> <p>Potential Partners: City of Martinsville, Henry County Parks and Recreation, local paddling clubs, local outfitters, DRBA</p> <p>Funding Opportunities: Henry County, City of Martinsville, local foundations, City of Eden, Rockingham County, DCR, in-kind donations</p> <p>Issues to Consider: Additional access needed at Morgan Ford and the North Carolina line.</p>
<b>Morgan Ford River Access</b>	<p>Project: River Access</p> <p>Proposed Timeline: Start date contingent on funding. Construction could be completed in approximately 4 months.</p> <p>Potential Partners: Henry County - Parks and Recreation, Economic Development and Tourism, DRBA</p> <p>Funding Opportunities: Henry County, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries</p> <p>Issues to Consider: Ingress and egress to site will need road and culvert, limited sight distance.</p>

## Summary of Improvements and Additions

TRAILS	
The Fieldale Trail	Extend trail in both directions. Connection to Textile Trail. Expand Textile Trail up Jordan Creek
The Dick & Willie Trail	Additional signage needed
Gravelly Nature Preserve Trails	Replace kiosk signage, re-work trail signs, add interpretive signage
Smith River Paw Path	Connect to Dick and Willie, add plantings and dog park equipment, possible pet watering station
Textile Heritage Trail	Extend trail across Jordan Creek via bridge to connect to Fieldale Park, add signage from Fieldale
PHCC Loop Trail	Extend trail around entire lakeshore and connect with Rock Ridge Trail and public boat ramp
Rock Ridge Trail	Extend trail around entire lakeshore and connect to PHCC Loop
Doe Run Trail	Rework trail signage, add interpretive signs for water quality monitoring station at creek
Lauren Mountain Preserve Trail	Addition of benches, picnic tables, add interpretive signage
The Great Road River Access Trail	Possible addition of handicap access deck at parking area across from Eastman entrance gate
J. Frank Wilson Park Trails	Additional road signage allowing for directional connection
The Silver Bell Trail	Connection to VMNH, YMCA and Frank Wilson Park neighborhood via sidewalk signage
Uptown Connection Spur Trail	Restroom signage visible from all sides
Philpott Lake Fitness Trail	Add trail extension to Philpott marina
Spencer Penn Center	Signage/kiosk, trail extension to Mayo River
PRESERVES	
Gravelly Nature Preserve	Signage re-work, trail directional signage
Lauren Mountain Preserve	Addition of benches, picnic tables, add interpretive signage
PARKS / BALLFIELDS	
Smith River Sports Complex	Improve access ramp, connect to Dick and Willie Passage Trail
Jack Dalton Park	Possible additional trail
Collinsville Jaycee Park	Trail improvements
Fieldale Park	Extend trail to Jordan Park, add water quality interpretive signage along Jordan Creek
Jordan Creek Park	Water quality protection interpretive signage along Jordan Creek, potential addition of trail
Doe Run Park	Water quality protection interpretive signage, CWQM monitoring area
Mt Olivet Ruritan Field	Possible short trail around ballfield
Horse Pasture Ruritan	Possible short trail around ballfield
Samuel Hairston	Possible short trail around ballfield
Figsboro Fields	Possible short trail around ballfield
Blackberry Park	Possible short trail around ballfield
Drewry Mason Fields	Possible short trail around ballfield
Chatham Park	Additional trails
Fisher Farm Park	Possible trail to Marrowbone Creek, water quality protection interpretive signage
RIVER ACCESS	*Signage needed on main roads directing public to all river accesses
Philpott Dam River Access	Re-work access on Franklin County side, rough, rocky slope to river needs to be graded
Bassett River Access	Add river info sign - Smith River Blueway
Smith River Outfitters River Access	Need Henry County easement, discuss with landowners, add river information sign - Smith River Blueway
The Great Road River Access	Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway
The Fieldale River Access	Re-work steps, add river information sign - Smith River Blueway
Doe Run River Access	Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway
South Martinsville River Access	Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway, improve grade, metal grate launch deck and improve or expand parking
Frith Drive River Access	Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway, metal steps to replace wooden crossties
Smith River Sports Complex River Access	Improve ramp with additional steps
Marrowbone Creek River Access	Add river information sign - Smith River Blueway, improve steps to metal grate with wooden canoe launch chute
Mitchell Bridge River Access	Add river information sign- Smith River Blueway, improve grade via switchbacks, possible metal grate landing at river's edge

## Priority Level High

### Project ready or under development

- Dick and Willie Passage Rail Trail
- Small Towns Collaborative Trail connector Bassett to Fieldale
- Fisher Farm Park / Marrowbone Creek Trails
- Smith River Blueway
- Uptown Connection Spur Tail restroom signs
- Smith River Sports Complex Connection to D&W
- Smith River Access Ramp at Morgan Ford

## Priority Level Medium

### Project feasible - needs additional research

- Fieldale Trail Extension
- Jones Creek Connector Trail
- Beaver Creek Reservoir Lakeshore Trails (PHCC and Rock Ridge)
- Textile Heritage Trail extension and bridge
- Bassett Trout Park
- Lauren Mountain Preserve interpretive signs and benches
- Chatham Park trail extensions
- Fieldale Connector Trail and Steps
- Mitchell Bridge River Access improvements

## Priority Level Low

### Project feasible - funding needed

- Dick and Willie Extension to Fieldale Trail via Smith River Bridge
- Lanier Farms Trail and River Access
- Jones Creek Connector Trail and Pond Loop
- Mayo River State Park
- Spencer Penn Trail Project
- Gravelly Nature Preserve kiosk and sign replacement
- Smith River Paw Path additions and connection to D&W
- Doe Run Park rework signage/ water quality station
- Great Road River Access handicap dock and boardwalk
- Fieldale River Access rework steps
- J. Frank Wilson Park Trail signage

# Implementation



For the Master Plan vision and recommendations to be realized, implementation steps are recommended. These recommendations include sensible planning and promotion, public and private investments and the development of appropriate programs.

The implementation of this Master Plan requires these progressive actions including:

- Undertaking more detailed planning with “boots on the ground” to explore and resolve the opportunities and constraints identified by this Plan.
- Promote and assist specific objectives, marketing, tourism, community
- Make green infrastructure investments.
- Acquire local, state and national funding

Each phase of planning is subject to a variety of factors, which determine their timing and include the availability of personnel and financial resources necessary to implement specific proposal; determination of whether an implementation step is a necessary precursor to or component of an outdoor recreational amenity; the interdependence of the various implementation tasks; in particular, the degree to which implementing one item is dependent upon the successful completion of another item; and the challenge which a particular implementation task is designed to address.

Although timelines are useful in planning for a specific project, it is suggested not to put forward a precise timetable for overall implementation. Therefore, the suggested timelines and its parts should be flexible and can be implemented at the community’s level of readiness.

Both Henry County and the City of Martinsville need to collaborate to

successfully implement the Master Plan. For this to work, an outside, independent organization, such as DRBA, is recommended to coordinate and manage this collaboration and manage the projects outlined in this plan. Other recommendations to consider before implementing the Master Plan include:

Make contact with agencies and organizations to determine the feasibility of creating partnerships to make recreational facilities and programs more accessible to local citizens.

Planning efforts should be coordinated with local governments to decrease duplication of effort and leverage resources and volunteers.

Provide a professional law enforcement presence through effective conservation law enforcement training.

Expand educational programs offered to the public that emphasize awareness of local natural resources and safety associated with hunting, fishing, boating and wildlife viewing.

Increase angling access and opportunities, including shoreline fishing, wheelchair-accessible facilities at trout-fishing areas where conditions are suitable and sound fisheries management and stocking of fish.

County and city planners should utilize comprehensive land conservation plans and expand the funding source for land conservation to ensure representation on protected lands for all of the local natural community types and rare species.

Unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, should be targeted for future land conservation efforts.



### **Steps to Success**

In order for the Master Plan to succeed and be useful to the community, the plans must be made public and the benefits of outdoor recreational amenities in the community promoted. The promotion should be aimed at two major outcomes that address Quality of Life factors: physical health success and economic health success.

Physical health success is achieved by the reduction in obesity and diabetes rates. This is a long-term goal, but results can begin to be seen almost immediately as levels of exercise and physical fitness increase. Healthier living and reduced maladies related to obesity will also aid in reduced costs, helping to achieve economic success.

Economic health success is achieved when the area sees economic return via tourism, new residents and businesses. It is difficult to prescribe a benchmark in terms of incoming revenue, but prolonged sustainability and profit are indicators of such progress.

Martinsville and Henry County have realized the direct results of economic and physical health success with the inception of the original Master Plan for Rivers and Trails and the completion and implementation of over 90% of the initial plan projects. Continuation of this success lies within the ability of the local municipalities to work together in partnership with organizations that can produce results for the community.

Building upon a successful campaign, the implementation phase should include recruitment of an active committee of nature advocates, elected officials and representatives from Parks and Recreation, the Health Department, schools (fitness and health), business leaders and others. The committee would undertake the tasks of trail and river access point maintenance and trail and river access development. In addition, the committee should be responsible for marketing, launching the branding, and event series coordination. The group will also be responsible for fundraising and creating partnerships in the community.

### **Marketing**

The Master Plan implementation can build upon an already implemented marketing campaign of the Smith River Trail System. Any marketing and branding strategy moving forward should start with a community-wide promotion strategy rooted in promoting tourism. Nature-based tourism is one of the largest growing industries in the United States, Martinsville and Henry County can market this region as a destination to millions of people living in cities just an hour or two away. It is a place to explore history, culture and nature, a place for “stay-cations” and day trips and a place grounded by its historical roots and pride in its sense of community.

### **Trail & River Access Point Naming**

Actual trail and river access point naming should continue to follow the trend of local branding with an overall strategy for regional identity. The current use of the Smith River Trail System encompasses both trails and river access locations and uses a prominent local feature that is readily identified. Specific names for trails should reflect the regional identity and the local references. Names should refer to natural or historical aspects or may refer to the surrounding area. These are “given” and typically will remain. The trail names for systems as presented in this Master Plan are primarily based upon a natural or historic feature. These names may be altered for educational and geographic reasons.

### **Signage & Element**

A gateway sign is a formal pronouncement of the trail, trail system, river access point or blueway water trail. In rural settings, depending upon design, trailhead elements may be preferred over actual signage. A trailhead element can be a type of signage but does not necessarily have to use words or advertisement. It can simply be a common element located in the landscape and repeated at various locations to indicate its presence, such as an archway or other type of architectural feature or landscaping located along wood lines or at trailheads. This could also double as a type of wayfinding device. A kiosk may serve as a trailhead element and may also incorporate signage.

### **Trail & River Access Marking**

A common and repeated “sign” language should be used to mark trails and river access points which can be readily identified to users. The methodology varies from simple color markers on trees to a complete brand and sign package featuring a logo that can also be used for marketing purposes. Marking can occur in a variety of ways. Often, early in projects, outdoor recreational assets are simply marked with a color. The color should be bright and visible in all weather conditions and seasons. This is adequate for short-term marking. Additional information can be added to trail marking, such as mile markers or name of trail. Mile markers can also be posted along a blue trail or along a river bank or bridge. This could be particularly important in emergency situations to alert authorities to an exact location.

# Agreements, Guidelines and Facilities



## Trail Agreements

There are numerous ways in which a trail becomes a reality. From the agreement with the property owner to allow for the trail, to the final alignment and aesthetic details, discussions and many decisions have to be made. From the property owner perspective, any trail should not compromise current property use to any extent agreed upon. The trail should also not cause concern of liability for the property owner.

From the trail user standpoint, the trail needs to be safe. It needs to be clearly marked and delineated. This is advantageous to the property owner as well. It also needs to be a complete and pleasurable experience. For all interested parties, the trail needs to be routed and located in such a way as to minimize constant maintenance and up-keep, other than regularly scheduled pruning and occasional repair from use.

In order to establish a functional, efficient, and usable trail system, a network of trail facilities is needed, linking off-road paths, trails and greenways with on-road bicycle routes, along shoulders and in bike lanes. This also includes sidewalks and crosswalks. As part of this effort, several key variables for trail users need consideration, including:

- Trail safety, including design and signage
- Connectivity of routes and facilities
- Directness of routes
- Attractiveness of routes and facilities
- Comfort for all types of trail users

The following is a sampling of common practices related to trail agreements, as well as design and use guidelines.

## Easements

To understand exactly what an easement is, it is best to define what is meant by “ownership” of a piece of property. This may best be described as a “bundle of rights,” which includes the right to occupy, use, lease, sell, and develop the land. An easement involves the exchange of one or more of these rights from the landowner to someone who does not own the land. An easement permits the holder certain rights regarding the land for specified purposes while the ownership of the land remains with the private property owner.

An easement is either voluntarily sold or donated by the landowner and constitutes a legally binding agreement that prohibits certain types of development or activities from taking place on the land while protecting its underlying conservation value. Easements are drawn up as permanent deeds and are recorded with the county Register of Deeds. Typically, the landowner conveys the easement to a qualified organization, such as a local land trust, local government agency, or other non-profit organization designed to hold it as a long-term stewardship responsibility and guarantee that the terms of the easement will be respected. The landowner retains ownership of the property, with the rights to sell the land or pass it along to his or her heirs. The terms of any easement will transfer intact to new ownership. Whether the easement holder is a public or non-profit organization, the holder has the responsibility to enforce and abide by and adhere to the requirements stipulated in the easement.

Trail easements are legally enforceable agreements through which the owner of land promises to preserve a linear corridor in its natural state and keep it substantially free of future development. This action is often referred to as “removing the development rights” from a given piece of land, or, in the case of trail easements, from a specific linear corridor that travels across a piece of land.

For trail purposes, such an agreement should include language stipulating public access for trail use. Such a restriction constitutes an “interest in land” that runs with the land and is binding on future owners. The trail corridor remains the property of the owner and can be sold or disposed of, but the trail easement is in perpetuity. This agreement to preserve identified land and allow public access along the trail can be donated or sold for its appraised value to a trail group, town, county or public agency. Donations of land or development rights are usually tax deductible, with the amount of the deduction depending on the individual circumstances of the owner.

A trail access easement is much like a right-of-way. Trail easements usually consist of a linear corridor 12 to 20 feet wide, though abandoned paths, routes and rail lines may be substantially wider. The actual trail is cleared of brush and is usually just 4 to 8 feet wide, depending on terrain and users. It is good to have a wider corridor beyond the trail “tread” so that a buffer exists between trail users and other uses of the land to ensure the safety and quality of the trail experience. The easement assures connectivity for the trail from one side of the property to the other as it passes onto neighboring properties.

Easements usually contain a provision for the relocation of the trail, either permanently or temporarily, at the landowner’s request. In this case, responsible agencies will work with the landowner to relocate in a way that maintains connectivity and accommodates both a quality trail experience and the land-management needs. Trail easements are the best tool for permanent trail protection, short of outright acquisition of the property by a non-profit or government agency. They are permanent and appear on the title of the property.

### **Land Trusts**

Land trusts are local, regional, statewide or national organizations that are established to protect land and its resources. They may also be referred to as conservancies, foundations, or associations. Their main purpose is to protect land that has natural, recreational, scenic, historic, or productive value. They are the fastest growing arm of the conservation movement today, with approximately 1,200 established and 50 new ones being formed every year in the United States. Land trusts are different from other conservation or preservation organizations by means of their direct involvement in land transactions. They initiate, implement, and monitor land protection devices for individual pieces of property or for larger land areas, depending on the trust’s specific goals. Sometimes their land protection efforts are combined with other conservation organizations, but their major objective is the preservation of the land itself so that it may continue to be a resource for future generations. Land trusts often are formed to protect particular land related resources: forests, farmland, open space, wetlands, or historic districts.



Land trusts protect land through several tools, including conservation easements, acquisition of land through direct purchase or bargain sale, land donation, life estate plans, and limited development strategies. Some land trusts own land outright and are responsible for its preservation and management, while others own no land but are primarily involved in monitoring easement restrictions. Land trusts also provide technical assistance to landowners deliberating on land preservation options as well as planning and educational services for local communities and the general public.

A land trust is usually organized as a private, non-profit, incorporated organization. This enables the land trust to hold titles to real estate and to accept charitable donations. The private, non-profit land trust has the advantages of prompt response time, fewer regulatory/ statutory restraints, confidentiality, a tax exempt status, and professional stewardship services. In some states, public agencies can perform a function similar to private land trusts. The advantages of the public agency include less time and paperwork to get the organization started and a greater likelihood that it will continue to exist to serve its function in perpetuity.

Sometimes publicly supported land preservation programs require that both a private, non-profit land trust and a public local or state agency hold conservation easements to provide maximum protection for preservation strategies.

Land trusts are usually started by a group of citizens in a community where an interest in the preservation of land has emerged as an issue with local significance. Technical help is available from several national land conservation organizations.





### Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a document describing a bilateral or multilateral agreement between parties. It expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action. It is often used in cases where parties either do not imply a legal commitment or in situations where the parties cannot create a legally enforceable agreement. An MOU can be employed where a property owner does not wish to record an easement but will allow for the trail anyway. The MOU will constitute a “hand shake” of understanding between any entity constructing and maintaining the trail, trail users and the property owner. The MOU should state that the trails are open to the public for educational and recreational purposes and that the property owner is relieved of liability in such case. However, it should require a property owner allowing hunting to post notice of such conflict or danger. It should also specify who is responsible for maintenance. Many agreements can be added into the MOU, but the document itself is not a legally binding document. To satisfy agencies that provide funds to build trails, either easements or MOUs with property owners are typically required.

### Liability

Liability related to trails is covered in Virginia General statutes Chapter XX. section XX is specific to liability: *Trails adjacent to or near a potential conflict of interest, such as between hunters and trail users, should have highly visible posted information that hunting occurs on adjacent properties to remind people not to trespass. Signage at trail heads and educational materials, along with a clearly marked corridor, can ensure any such conflicts or accidents do not occur. There may also be the posting of signs along the trail easement periphery at regular distances.* Property owners will also need to post signs on their property establishing a safety zone between the trail and the active hunting land.

### Trail Route Planning and Design Guidelines

The Master Plan was conceptualized by taking citizen input and mapping it with known natural assets of the community. While certain conversations during the Master Plan process required studying parcel-specific opportunities and constraints, the Master Plan itself does not recognize property lines. As a conceptual plan, its purpose is to propose the vision of a green infrastructure with links within the cultural landscape. The conceptual ideas in the Master Plan can have a real effect on a property and on a property owner. This is particularly true where there is deep emotional attachment to the land or in urban settings where privacy and space are considerations. Therefore, certain guidelines are offered as a way to best route and design a trail at a more precise level. These are only guidelines, but subscribing to them as completely as possible can provide the best sustainable trail experience with the least amount of maintenance for a community. Planning guidelines encourage routing trails and building river access points across public land, rights-of-way, or easements acquired from willing landowners. Existing easements, such as sewer and gas easements, would require a land owner to update said easement to allow for a trail, but this may be an excellent alternative route option for several trail sections. Some easements may end up as the permanent route. This decision will need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### Process

First and foremost, a trail route or river access point must adequately take measures to protect major ecological systems, including but not limited to legacy forests, surface water bodies, riparian corridors, viewsheds, historic landscapes, prime agricultural land and endangered species habitats. It is also necessary to identify those areas where human trespass is permissible and where it should be minimized. This will require “boots on the ground” planning in cooperation with property owners for every section of trails and river access. Protecting flora and fauna that are significant contributors to the region’s natural beauty - the area’s primary potential economic resource - is fundamental as a foundation of the county’s cultural landscape. A simple and consistent process for “on the ground” trail route planning will yield informed decisions. In the end, all trail routes should be walked, with property owner participation and/or permission, to verify any decisions based on maps and to capitalize on “in the field” attributes such as significant trees, rock outcroppings and other natural features.

- Identify endpoints of trail or any phase of a trail
- Determine if endpoints need to be on same side of any waterway
- Identify other crossings which can incur additional costs
- The trail route corridor should follow any Flood Plain Fringe.
- Work closely with the property lines/owners for best workable options and feasibility.

Whenever possible, trails should be located along or uphill from the edge of the floodway fringe. This ensures longevity of trail (any surface) by avoiding damages during extraordinary flood events and allows property owners an easy access to observe flood events and monitor conditions and land. In extreme flood events, it can also create a zone where sand bagging can occur through easy transport and staging (needed if near homes, not along whole corridor). Beginning with the floodway fringe route, it is best to work to find best final route options while identifying what is best for the property owner.

Bridges are logical places for trailheads. It is here that a trail along a stream or floodway meets the on-road bike and driving corridors. Rights-of-way along road shoulders will be employed as an alternate to routing along creeks, streams and rivers. On-road routes and connectors may be utilized to link to other trails or may help provide short-term linkages in an incomplete trail system. If a trail can extend only a partial distance between bridges, getting permission to route a trail along a property line to connect with the public right-of-way is a suitable, though less preferred, alternative. Other options include creek crossings and extending the trail along the other side of the creek with property owner permission. Bridges add cost, though, and therefore a trail should be value-engineered to determine costs and feasibility.

### Trail Development Guidelines

The Master Plan describes the establishment of a safe, two-way, non-motorized trail with secure trailheads. Trail visibility and safe travel clearances for all trail users should dictate trail design.

There are three goals to strive for when designing and building trails:

- Limit environmental impacts
- Ensure a trail will have minimal maintenance, other than routine upkeep or occasional rerouting
- Provide a pleasurable and memorable experience for the user, including avoiding user conflicts

Creating the pleasurable experience is more than providing the story at a historic or cultural site; it involves the space between destinations. In an expansive system, the trail can become the destination itself with the other amenities being “bonus” opportunities to socialize, learn and contribute to enjoyment.

Creating the “experience” of the trail requires an intimate knowledge of the natural and cultural landscape of the corridor and necessitates maximizing opportunities to route the trail along unique features, or “control points”, such as:

- Rock outcroppings
- Legacy trees or forests
- Scenic vistas and viewsheds

Where new trails are planned, it is important to harmonize their appearance with the environmental, ecological and visual attributes of the landscape.

A contour trail is a path that gently traverses a hill or sideslope. It is characterized by a gentle grade, undulations called grade reversals, and a tread that usually tilts or outslopes slightly toward the outer edge. These features minimize tread erosion by allowing water to drain in a gentle, non-erosive manner called sheet flow. When water drains in thin, dispersed sheets, soil stays where it belongs: on the trail.

### Contour trail tips:

- Keep the water off the tread, and users on it
- Build on the contour and use frequent grade reversals (“surf the hillside”)
- Follow the half-rule: A trail’s grade shouldn’t exceed half the grade of the sideslope
- Maximum grade should be 15 percent
- Average grade should stay under 10 percent (with grade reversals)
- Route trails to positive control points (viewpoints, water, other attractions)
- Use bench-cut construction, and excavate soil from the hillside
- For reroutes, reclaim old trail thoroughly: the visual corridor and trail tread
- Use natural rock or other rock features to improve sustainability
- “Friends” groups can be formed to assist with maintenance of the trail





### Trail Facilities

As use and demand persist, it will be necessary to invest in facilities such as restrooms, rest stops, shelters, and fountains for drinking water. They can be incorporated into larger sites of historical, cultural and natural significance or may stand alone. Any facilities and/or trailheads built as part of the Master Plan effort should fit in to the community in which they are located. As civic areas, they should be positive and desired amenities in the community and the landscape and should:

- Enhance compatibility with local architecture and landscape in design
- Utilize traditional materials and methods in facility design
- Use local/indigenous landscape and construction materials
- Restroom facilities are encouraged to be composting toilets that are low maintenance and open year-round.

### Trailhead

Trailheads provide starting and ending points for use of the trail and may be locations where motor vehicle and bicycle parking are provided. There are usually two classifications of trailheads, regional and local trailhead. Regional trailheads should include vehicle parking, public restroom facilities, benches, seat walls, bicycle parking, informative exhibits and maps, water fountains, sanitation resources for pet owners and other features. Local trailheads occur at intersections with roadways. They typically have a sign or gateway element indicating the presence of the trail and may include additional features such as benches or seat walls and informative exhibits and maps. Trail use rules are typically posted at each local trailhead. Parking is along road shoulder.

Waysides provide places to stop and rest along the way. Located between trailheads, waysides may stand alone or may link to larger sites of historical, cultural or natural significance. They can include the same amenities found at trailheads or may simply be a bench and covered area.

### Lighting

One of the main attractions of living in rural areas is the absence of city lights. This is a major factor for the enjoyment of the night sky. As trails and trail related facilities such as regional trailheads are built on previously natural areas, the incidence of light pollution can become an important issue. Adequate lighting is essential for security and public safety, but the careful design, selection and placement of lighting fixtures can do a lot to minimize the spread of lighting into previously dark landscapes. It is important to realize that “dark skies” does not mean dark ground. Rather it means adequate, yet subtle, lighting to illuminate public spaces for safety.

The appropriate selection of light fixtures and their correct placement in public spaces can do much to promote safety as well as a desirable ambience. The International Dark-sky Association has produced a comprehensive Outdoor Lighting Code handbook that contains much “best practice” advice.

### Bike Parking

Just as the provision of motor vehicle parking has been shown to increase driving, the provision of safe and convenient parking for bicycles can have the same effect on bicycling. Bicycle parking can be provided at a fraction of the cost of automobile parking and in a fraction of the space. A dozen bicycles can be parked in the area of one car parking space at a cost of tens of dollars per bicycle space versus hundreds or thousands of dollars per motor vehicle space. Many avid cyclists state that their decision to travel particular routes relies on safe areas to park and lock bikes.



### **Maintenance**

The trails and river access points in this Master Plan were planned with citizen input. The resulting Master Plan is collaborative and based upon community aspirations. Therefore, the trails are meant to be built and owned by the community until such time as a town, county or state agency assumes maintenance.

In most cases, “Friends” groups can be formed to assist with volunteer maintenance of the trail. The “Adopt-a-Trail” program and volunteers may also be utilized to assist in maintenance, repair and refuse removal.

### **Trash removal**

Trash cans, recycling containers and related paraphernalia should be located at each trailhead and wayside. At those locations, volunteers or staff will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining trash and litter control.

### **Adopt-a-Trail**

Adopt-a-Trail is an all-volunteer program that will give the public an opportunity to be actively involved in conserving and maintaining the natural wealth and beauty of the trails and river access points. Volunteers can assist Parks and Recreation or other Authority staff with the vital task of improvements and maintenance. Adopt-a-Trail grant opportunities are provided through DRBA in partnership with the City of Martinsville and Henry County.

The current Adopt-a-Trail program states that a trail or trail section must be adopted for a period of one year. Trail inspections may include the following: observing the condition of trailhead parking lot, bulletin board and trail signs, monitoring trail conditions and performing routine maintenance, picking up litter, and notifying of any problems or additional maintenance needs.

Volunteers are asked to visit the adopted trail or trail section at least six times per year (approximately once every two months). Routine maintenance involves keeping the trail surface free of loose rocks, limbs and other debris, pruning small limbs from the trail corridor, cleaning waterbars and drainage ditches, and clearing debris from benches, bridges, and other structures. Volunteers are provided information and instruction on maintaining specific trails to meet area management guidelines. Volunteers are asked to provide their own trail maintenance tools. Volunteers should also report any suspicious or illegal activity.

The safety of the volunteers is critical, and they are encouraged to dress appropriately for trail work and use gloves, safety glasses and other protective gear when necessary. In addition, all work should take place during daylight hours and be performed with safety in mind.



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## Benefits of Outdoor Recreational Assets



Outdoor recreation is an easy and affordable means of enjoyment for men, women and children of all ages. It provides a way to get outside and enjoy the natural surroundings and to breathe in the fresh air.

However, getting outside to enjoy a beautiful day isn't a personal indulgence. Enjoying outdoor recreation, such as mountain biking, hiking or kayaking provides numerous benefits for children, families, businesses, municipalities and the environment.

Outdoor recreation has psychological benefits, including the prevention or reduction of stress; improved self-esteem, confidence and creativity; spiritual growth; and an increased sense of exhilaration, adventure and challenge from life.

Getting outside provides physical benefits, such as aerobic, cardiovascular and muscular fitness, as well as improved functioning of the immune system.

The great outdoors afford social benefits like bonding with like-minded people who enjoy outdoor activities and feeling an increased pride in your community and nation.

Outdoor recreation pays off with economic benefits. People who regularly participate in outdoor recreation tend to be more productive at work. Outdoor recreation creates job opportunities for others, which leads to economic growth. In addition, the preservation of the natural areas needed for outdoor recreation increases property values.

Outdoor recreation provides environmental benefits, including increased environmental awareness. Concern that results from outdoor recreation can lead to increased involvement in environmental issues.

The beneficial impact of outdoor recreation amenities can be evaluated in short- and long-term impacts, including tourism opportunities and associated business ventures. The investment in outdoor recreation is a long-term investment in the tourist trade. In the short-term, however, there is the potential to have immediate returns in terms of dollars saved on public health by reducing obesity and increasing physical fitness. In addition to creating jobs related to trail and river access development, their associated tourism creates a need for jobs in food service, accommodation, transportation and other industries.

More than four million residents of metro areas in North Carolina and Virginia live within an easy day's drive of Martinsville and Henry County. Scenery and access to natural areas are top reasons given for planning a trip, according to a recent study by VirginiaTourism.

People are becoming increasingly aware of the finite, interconnected and fragile nature of the natural environment, and tourism is becoming an increasingly popular expression of this awareness. In fact, tourism is now the world's largest industry, with nature tourism the fastest growing segment. Those four million people in the Piedmont, or a portion thereof, are travelling and spending money. For current businesses, it means sales tax and revenues.

## Economic Benefits

Local governments are facing growing pressure with respect to encouraging or maintaining quality of life, addressing social issues, and ensuring recreation and leisure services and supports remain a fundamental service for all residents, businesses and visitors. Competing needs and conflicting priorities for limited resources are often felt in a reduction of access to the benefits to physical health, social development, community well-being and ultimately economic vibrancy.

Locality	Dollars
Franklin County	18.23
Henry County	22.21
Patrick County	15.61
Pittsylvania County	10.84
Town of Rocky Mount	6.45
City of Danville	133.96
City of Martinsville	42.72
Statewide	71.09

Source: Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, Comprehensive Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures, 2015.

Outdoor recreational assets and services contribute to economic development by attracting business to communities (recreation, sport, arts, culture, outdoor/environmental). In addition, they draw tourism and contribute to local economies and can be significant employment generators.

Small investments in outdoor recreation can often yield large economic returns from events, capital development, and ongoing services. Green spaces increase property value and tax revenue on adjacent land, and are often used as marketing features by developers.

Trails are also excellent storm water retention strategies and less expensive than sewer expansion.

Economic benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Opportunity to attract tourists
- Attract, create and stimulate business whose employees are eager for outdoor recreation
- Trail construction employment opportunities
- Enhanced ability to attract and retain business through improved quality of life
- Potential for increased property values
- Trail corridors can be less costly to air and water cleanup from pollution (vs. no buffer)
- Outdoor recreational assets offer less costly places to exercise than indoor gyms and clubs

## Health Benefits

The provision of an extensive trail system and access to the Smith River can provide an option for citizens to exercise, in addition to organized recreational opportunities. Trail facilities are often the most used in a community and they cost a fraction of the expense to build formal facilities such as gyms or pools. In the outdoor industry it is widely believed that for every dollar spent on trails nearly three dollars of public health benefits are produced.

Outdoor exercise can have more beneficial effects than indoor exercise. Spending time in nature's silence better acquaints people with their own thoughts and feelings, leading to a sense of calm and inner peace. Walking just twenty minutes a day can improve health dramatically. Walking is a low impact exercise that can help manage weight, lower diabetes risk, improve mood, lower cholesterol and blood pressure and has many other health benefits. It's a simple form of exercise that is free and accessible to everyone.

Trails and access to river-related activities provide a more affordable alternative for physical activity than traditional team sports and fitness classes. Physical activity helps to:

- Control weight
- Control high blood pressure
- Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and colon cancer
- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Reduce arthritis pain and disability
- Prevent osteoporosis and falls
- Foster healthy muscles, bones and joints
- Maintain function and preserve independence in older adults

While proximity and safety are key considerations for the use of trail and/or river, the provision of such an amenity is often all it takes for use to commence. The likelihood of regular trail use increases exponentially by simply eliminating the need to get into a car and drive (a long distance) to a location to recreate.

More and more doctors are also recognizing the psychological needs that can be satisfied with outdoor recreation. A great walk through the woods or in the outdoors can trigger additional brain activity that has been observed to provide physiological relief. Researchers have found that those who exercise in natural settings feel more restored and less anxious than those who burned the same calories in a gym. Walking on a treadmill is very systematic and lacks the soothing influence of a walk in the woods.

Some physical benefits may not seem so obvious. Safe off-road routes that cater to multiple user groups offer an alternative to driving. Choosing to use a trail instead of making a trip in the car can reduce the likelihood of accidents by reducing the total number of cars on the road and trips made in a community.

## Environmental Benefits

The environmental benefits of trails and public river access are primarily associated with the trail corridor itself and factors such as being incorporated into a buffer on the river. Other factors, including easements and their type and purpose, can also play a role in providing environmental benefits.

Trail corridors and buffers preserve public open space, reduce and filter stormwater runoff, can regulate stream and river temperatures, provide an opportunity to reduce air and water pollution by providing transportation alternatives and provide protected wildlife corridors for migration and inhabitancy.

Public outdoor recreational assets help to preserve a public open space. Trails and river access points often encourage the preservation of forested areas which provide multiple benefits. When located as part of a streamside forest, forested trail areas help protect water and air quality and provide protection against flooding, erosion and sedimentation, and stream corridor degradation. These vegetated corridors and buffers along streams and rivers help to filter runoff. This is essential for protecting water from fertilizers, pesticides and other harmful pollutants, particularly in heavy rain events. In addition to impacting water quality, destruction of critical ecological areas destroys plant and animal habitats. Healthy creek and river banks are vegetated, not only providing runoff protection and stream bank stabilization, but also helping to maintain desired water temperatures for wildlife. Additionally, healthy streams will have pools as well as shallows. Stream bank stability ensures minimal erosion and preserves the aquatic habitats.

Plans for future trails, blueways and greenways can serve both to protect natural areas along streams and floodways and to provide important non-motorized transportation linkages. When trails provide safe off-road routes which cater to multiple user groups, the option to walk or bike can replace a choice to drive. This can reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released in a community. While the offset may seem minimal, it carries more weight when coupled with the physical and social benefits and also contributes to the overall goal of sustainability of the system and the community.

Primary concerns related to the protection of streams and rivers are:

**Water Quality:** Stream buffers are vegetated boundaries alongside waterways, which are critical to filtering out sediment, nutrients and other pollutants that would contaminate water. To maintain and enhance water quality, it is critical that stream buffers remain intact along streams and rivers.

**Flood Control:** Forested buffers supply flood control, slowing the flow of storm water and allowing it to spread out across the floodplain where it can be absorbed. Depending on the stream, soils and topography, buffers should be between 50-200 feet wide.



## Social Benefits

Wherever trails have become a strong component in an area, parts of the community have become connected as its citizens have met and come to know one another in the outdoors.

Trails and river access:

- Improve the quality of life and desirability of an area
- Provide a public open space
- Provide an opportunity for gathering and community interaction

The social benefits also include making connections to history and culture, tying together generations of conflict and resolution, boom and bust, and livelihoods of days gone by and those of tomorrow. The social benefits are additionally augmented when coupled with the stories and lore of surrounding communities. These will be accessible with connections to trails and features beyond the borders of our area with trails such as the Mountains-to-sea Trail and Beaches-to-Bluegrass trail. Educational opportunities abound with a well-planned network of trails and access to the river that link children and adults with nature. These same outdoor recreational assets can be designed and located to tell the stories of our the area's rich heritage.





### EcoTourism

In response to the increasing appreciation of nature experiences, a new travel ethic has arisen which is now called "ecotourism." This term has become increasingly popular in both conservation and travel circles; however, it must be noted that most tourism in natural areas today is not ecotourism and is not, therefore, sustainable. A walk through the forest is not ecotourism unless that particular walk somehow benefits that environment and the citizens who live there. A rafting trip is only ecotourism if it raises awareness and funds to help protect the watershed. Ecotourism can thus be distinguished from nature tourism by its emphasis on conservation, education, traveler responsibility and active community participation.

Specifically, ecotourism possesses the following characteristics:

- Conscientious, low-impact visitor behavior
- Sensitivity towards, and appreciation of, local cultures and biodiversity
- Support for local conservation efforts
- Sustainable benefits to local communities
- Local participation in decision-making
- Educational components for both the traveler and local communities

While increased tourism must be managed to avoid damage to the landscapes and ecologies that people come to visit, this same growth creates significant opportunities for both conservation and local community benefit. Ecotourism can provide much needed revenues for the protection of natural areas, revenues that might not be available from other sources. Additionally, ecotourism can provide a viable economic development alternative for local communities with few other income-generating options. Rural communities like

those in Martinsville and Henry County are often rich with local knowledge and a strong appreciation of their natural and cultural heritage. Local lore and storytelling fascinate visitors, and the cultural history is conserved in the process. Moreover, ecotourism can increase the level of education and activism among travelers, making them more enthusiastic and effective agents of conservation.

This resource and its approach to marrying preservation with appropriate new business can be explored as a catalyst for local tourist industries and other sources of community revenue. Ecotourism creates jobs in food service, accommodation, transportation, and other industries.

Ecotourism also provides a powerful incentive to protect the environment. One of the basic tenets of ecotourism is to engage local communities so they benefit from conservation, economic development and education. By bringing residents into the business of ecotourism, not only can local people meet their economic needs, but they also can maintain and enhance the "sense of place" that is critical for long-term conservation.

*Many rural city and county tourism businesses have hopped on the bandwagon of ecotourism. But the financial impact of environmentally sound vacationing can be both a benefit and a burden to the countries hosting green-footed travelers. A common ecotourism goal is the creation of economic benefits, whether profits for companies, community jobs or outdoor recreational revenue. Ecotourism can create jobs in remote areas far better than in metropolitan areas.*

*"The annual amount spent on tourism internationally exceeded \$444 billion at the beginning of the 21st century," said Wendy Vanasselt, author of "Ecotourism and Conservation: Are They Compatible." According to Vanasselt, ecotourism may comprise 40 to 60 percent of tourist spending and its popularity is growing by 10 to 30 percent each year.*

*In addition, ecotourists typically advocate for the sale of local handicrafts, use of local lodging and the use of locally-grown food in restaurants, as well as the implementation of training programs that enable locals to fill positions as tour guides, hotel managers and park rangers, according to Vanasselt.*



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# Public Input



Although experienced outdoor recreation professionals are able to identify recreational needs in local communities, citizen input is required when designing an inclusive Master Plan and helping to prioritize these needs. Reaching out to community citizens is time consuming, yet it is critical to recognize that public money is being spent to build outdoor recreational assets. Public input combined with professional knowledge and expertise in guiding that input, is what ultimately makes a Master Plan successful.

Public participation contributes to better decisions because decision-makers have more complete information – in the form of additional facts, values, and perspectives obtained through public input – to bring to bear on the decision process. They can then incorporate the best information and expertise of all stakeholders. Decisions are more implementable and sustainable because the decision considers the needs and interests of all stakeholders, including vulnerable/marginalized populations, and stakeholders better understand and are more invested in the outcomes.

As a result, decisions that are informed by public participation processes are seen as more legitimate and are less subject to challenge. Decision-makers who fully understand stakeholder interests also become better communicators, able to explain decisions and decision rationale in terms stakeholders understand and in ways that relate to stakeholders' values and concerns.

Another major result of sustained public participation in decisions and their implementation is the development of capacity for managing difficult social problems. This capacity includes improved relationships and trust between decision-makers and the public, and among different stakeholders themselves. Once stakeholders are invited into the decision process, it becomes more difficult for them to merely stand to the side and say “no.”

The importance of public participation in the process cannot be overstated. The very first trails and river access locations were a result of direct request to county and city government by citizens in Martinsville and Henry County. Through a variety of public meetings and one-on-one discussions over the past few years, the master plan development team has received invaluable input on the improvement of existing projects and the development wishes for new infrastructure.

Many of the original trails and river accesses were developed based on the direct input from the public. Community involvement in the planning process has been on-going since the first Rivers and Trails Master Plan was developed in 2008. As people became aware of the projects and began to utilize the economic and physical benefits their desire for additional projects grew.

An outdoor recreation plan for rivers and trails truly is a public document developed with the highest importance on community input. This plan utilized many strategies to engage public input including Advisory Board Meetings, focus groups, personal interviews and surveys. Over 500 people contributed their input to this Master Plan, including 20 advisory board meetings, 6 focus groups, 44 personal interviews, 2 public meetings with combined attendance of 52 and 172 responses to the online survey.

## **Master Plan Public Input Survey**

The Survey was designed by the Master Plan Stakeholder Committee and distributed in person at focus groups, personal interviews and public meetings. It was also made available online, and input was encouraged through DRBA's E-Newsletter that reaches almost 5,000 contacts/per send. The Survey was designed to gather information about both current perceptions and uses of outdoor recreation and future “wish list” of trails and river access points.

# Master Plan Public Input Survey

## 1. Tell us where you live

- Henry County
- City of Martinsville
- Other (specify City/County)

## 2. How would you rate the current outdoor recreational opportunities in Martinsville & Henry County

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Amazing!
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

## 3. How often do you participate in the following outdoor recreational activities below? Please check all that apply.

	Never	1-5 times month	1-5 times week	Daily
Walking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kayak/Canoe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rafting/Tubi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Swimming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fishing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horseback R	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Camping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 4. Do you have any suggestions for other types of outdoor recreational opportunities in MHC?

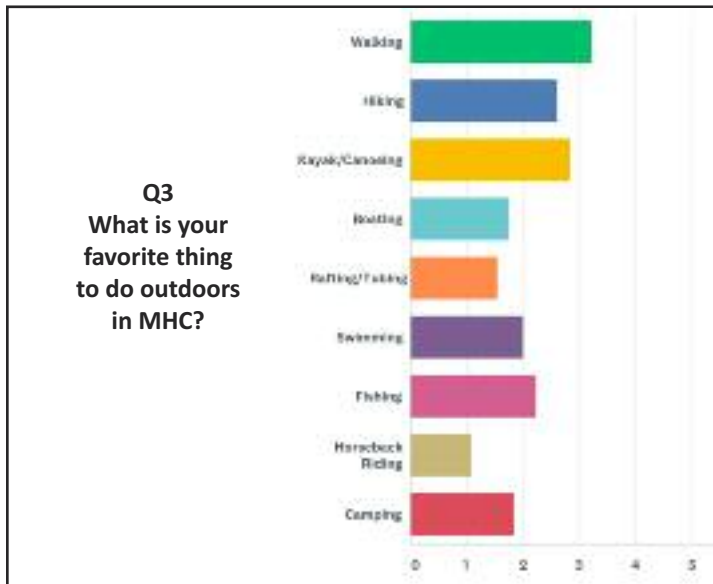
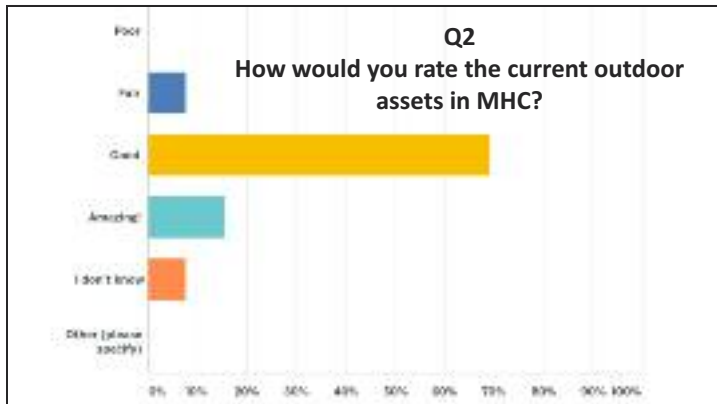
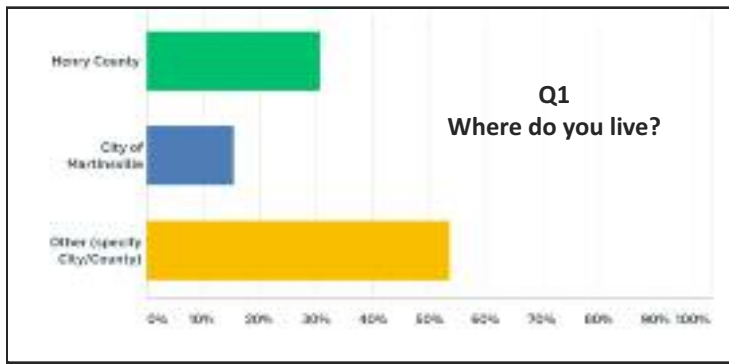
## 5. Do you have any suggestions for locations for new trails?

## 6. Do you have any suggestions for new river access locations?

## 7. Do you have any other suggestions you'd like to share?

## 8. One last question... If you are an MHC resident, how long have you lived here?

## Public Input Survey Results



**Q4** Do you have any suggestions for other types of outdoor recreational opportunities in MHC? Responses include: More biking and mountain biking trails, more options for adults and children with disabilities, dog park, adult playground, play wave/ whitewater park, guided wildflower identification walks, 4-wheeling trails, bird watching trails, longer, continuous trail(s), ultra cross country events, zip lines

**Q5** Do you have any suggestions for locations for new trails?

- Martinsville Reservoir/Connect to PHCC (32 responses)
- Martinsville High School- Hospital (17 responses)
- Additions to Philpott Lake trails (15 responses)
- Better trail along Marrowbone Creek (10 responses)
- Extend Dick & Willie (5 responses)
- Below Martinsville Dam
- Fieldale to Bassett
- Trails at Mitchell Bridge area
- Fisher Farm Park
- Extend Fieldale Trail
- Mountain Biking Trails at Patriot Centre Industrial Complex to connect to PHCC
- Marrowbone Creek River Access to Fisher Farm Park.
- Collinsville Primary

**Q6** Do you have any suggestions for new river access locations?

- At Morgan Ford Bridge (25 responses)
- Somewhere on the North and South Fork of the Mayo
- On Smith: somewhere between Fieldale Access and Doe Run Access
- On North Mayo: Moores Mill Road Bridge
- Near Philpott Drive/Bassett Mirror.
- Somewhere below Mitchell Bridge
- Clubhouse Drive

**Q7** Do you have any other suggestions you'd like to share?

- Henry County is leaps and bounds ahead of its neighboring counties as recreation opportunities are concerned.
- Recreational shooting (range, skeets, etc)
- Trash is always a problem. Emphasize prevention, maybe a public awareness campaign
- Maybe convince law enforcement to have strict enforcement campaign
- What is the status of the Magic Miles effort along the Smith in the Dam to Bassett area? • With the focus being placed on the opioid addiction issue in the region and state, being physically active in outdoor recreation might be offered as part of a healthy lifestyle/recovery/prevention protocol. Local doctors/hospitals may be willing to prescribe what DRBA promotes to individuals in need of health issues recovery/prevention.
- Extend the Dick and Willie

**Q8** One last question... If you are an MHC resident, how long have you lived here?

0-5 years: 17%      5-10 years: 0%      10-30 years: 33%      Over 30 years: 50%

### Virginia Outdoor Plan (VOP)

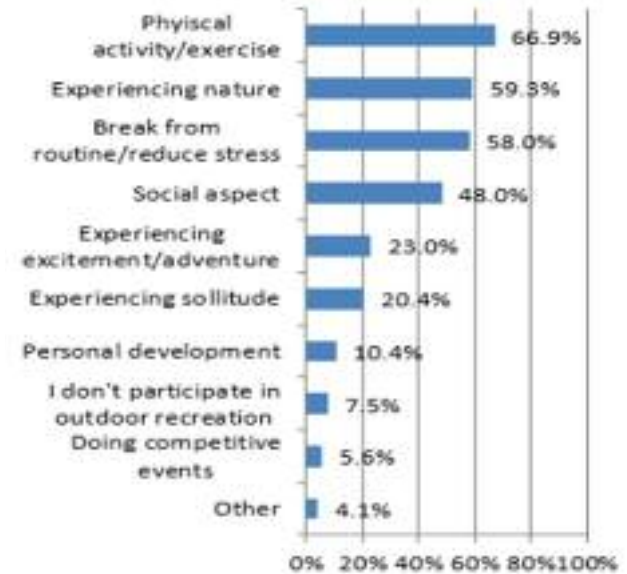
The Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) is the state's comprehensive plan for land conservation, outdoor recreation and open-space planning. The plan is required for Virginia to participate in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program. In addition, it provides guidance for the protection of lands through the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. The VOP is completed every five years and the most recent Plan was completed in 2018.

The inventory of outdoor recreation facilities was completed by 92 percent of Virginia localities. The VOP also utilizes Outdoors Demand Survey for public input. In 2017, the random survey was administered by the University of Virginia's Center for Survey Research. The survey was mailed to nearly 14,000 households, and 3,375 responded.

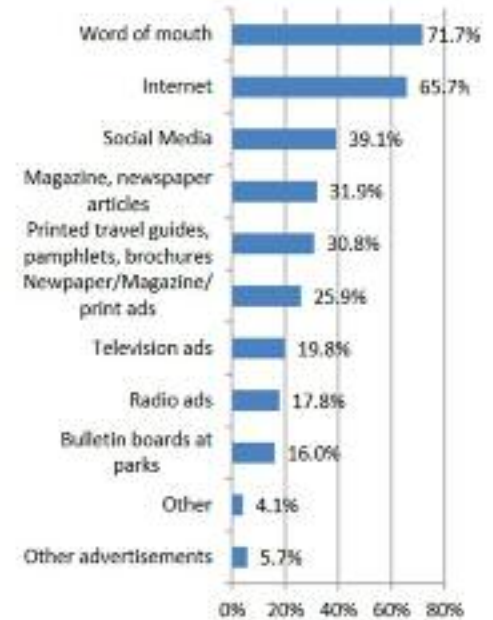
Since the 2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan was published, annual meetings have been held in each of 21 planning districts. In 2014, 2015 and 2016, DCR in partnership with the planning district commissions hosted 66 meetings. This input from outdoor recreation professionals and citizens is essential in maintaining the VOP as a viable goal-focused planning tool.

The VOP includes: Vision for Virginia's Outdoors - An introduction to the plan and data about needs for outdoor recreation in Virginia, Economics and Tourism - In-depth analysis of the link between economic growth and outdoor recreation, Outdoor Recreation and Health - An exploration of outdoor recreation's effect on public health, Trends in Outdoor Recreation Planning, Conservation Planning, Planning Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation - Resources for planners, including guidance for landowner liability and wetlands, Land and Water Conservation Fund Programs and Regional Analysis and Recommendations - Detailed data and recommendations about public outdoor recreation and land conservation.

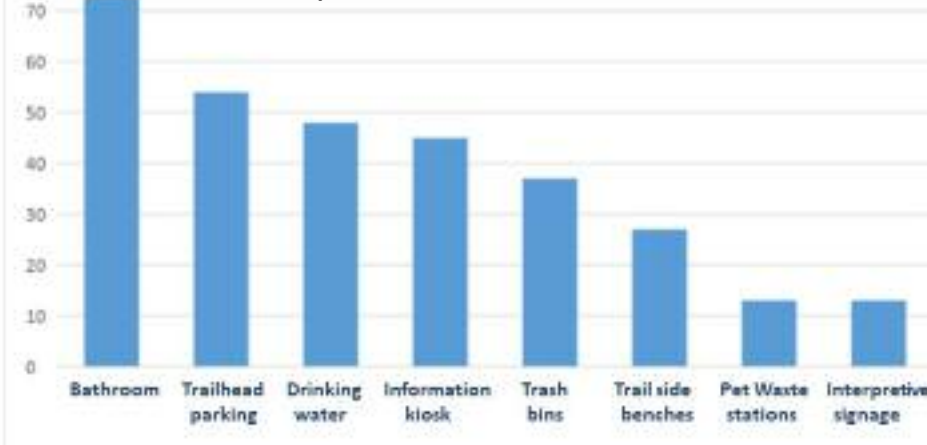
### Main Reasons for Participating in Outdoor Recreation



### Favorite Sources of Outdoor Recreation



### Most Important Trail Amenities



# Additional Resources



## Federal Grants

Rules and regulations associated with the use of federal funding are complex and time intensive. These programs require knowledgeable staff and extensive work associated with grant implementation and reimbursement. Smaller and rural localities, which have fewer staff to manage complicated grant requirements, have greater difficulty meeting these requirements. Reduced funding for technical support at the state level further complicates the use of these funds.

- Land and Water Conservation Fund - (National Park Service and DCR )
- Forest Legacy and other federal programs (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Forestry)
- Federal transportation grants ( Federal Highway Administration and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT))
- Virginia Recreational Trails Program (RTP) - (Federal Highway Administration and DCR)

## State Grants

Funding for acquisition and easements through the Virginia Land Conservation Fund has continued through periods of reduced development grants across granting agencies. While much of this conservation work is solely for preservation, many sites are appropriate for public access. However, the lack of funding for development has prevented the next phase of conservation and public education for these conserved lands.

- Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF)
- Recreational Access Program (VDOT)
- Open Space Recreation and Conservation Fund (DCR)
- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) - (Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development)

## Local Funding Opportunities

- Capital funds allocated by localities
- Carry-over funding at end of year fiscal closeout
- Virginia Code §15.2-2316.2 - Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

## Private Foundations

- Technical Assistance and Partnerships
- NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (Technical assistance for planning)

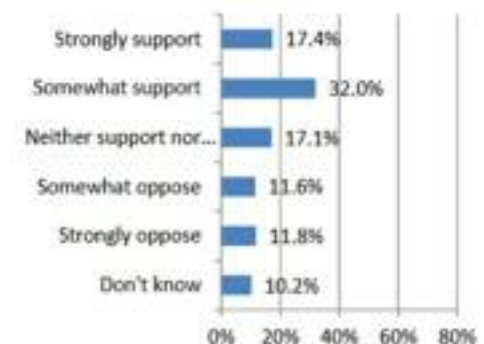
## Partnerships:

- Virginia Tourism Corporation
- Wildlife Management Plan
- Health Department

## Additional Strategies

- Counties and municipalities should encourage philanthropic giving
- Outdoor recreation tourism should be enhanced through marketing
- Explore possibilities to establish regional or local special taxes
- Enable user fees to cover costs of environmental services

Virginia resident support for outdoor recreation tax. (Source: 2017 VOP)



## FAQ

### How long will it take to build new trails and river access?

Master Plans develop over time as individual trail and river access projects, guided by the Master Plan, grow together. Funding and expertise will determine individual efforts and facilitate linkages. Starting with “pilot projects,” the Plan is expected to take 5-10 years.

### How is land acquired for development of trails?

A guiding principle of the Master Plan is “respect for the land and respect for the land owners.” As communities determine the location of new trails and river access points, they should begin looking at routes that include public lands or property owned by willing landholders.

### Are trails safe for my neighborhood?

Safety along trails is of the highest importance. There is little evidence to support the fear that these natural spaces encourage criminal activity. In fact, evidence supports the notion that greenways and trails may actually discourage crime and vandalism in many areas. These areas no longer serve as places for people to dump trash, vandalize or engage in criminal activity because there is too great a risk that they will be discovered. Communities refer to this “self- policing” as a form of community watch. The more frequent use of the trails, the safer these environments become.

### Can't trails just go along the roads and public roads?

Some have asked about simply using existing road rights-of- way instead of building trails. That's a perfectly legitimate option that will most surely be applied in certain locations, particularly in the short-term as more trails come online, yet the system itself is still incomplete. But, with the long- term objective being economic health via tourism, another question must be asked. If you were one of those 2 million people within a hour's drive of Martinsville and Henry County, would you load up the family, or even go by yourself, and travel that hour to walk along the side of the road?

### Who is liable if someone gets hurt on a trail?

Liability related to trails is covered in Virginia General Statutes. In short, “an owner of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits without charge any person to use such land for educational or recreational purposes owes the person the same duty of care that he owes a trespasser.” Key parts include “without charge” and “for educational or recreational purposes”. If those basic conditions are met, then the land owner is not typically liable. Additionally, for easements from private property owners, the municipality that holds the easement is responsible for the liability.



# Acknowledgements



This Master Plan was completed in cooperation with the Martinsville/Henry County Rivers and Trails Committee, Henry County Parks and Recreation, The City of Martinsville and the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA). Funding for plan development and distribution was provided by the Harvest Foundation.

## Master Plan Committee

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Ellen Jesse - Board of Directors Dan River Basin Association  
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Note: Master Plan Committee cooperation occurred throughout the course of plan development via one-on-one meetings and group discussions. Regularly scheduled Master Plan Committee meetings were conducted during the final phases of plan development. A special thank you to all who contributed to the Master Plan. Many residents of Martinsville and Henry County provided suggestions and observations that were key in developing this plan. We would like to acknowledge all the volunteers that help maintain our current rivers and trails network and those who participate in contributing to the economic development of outdoor recreation. Thank you to the staff and volunteers of the Dan River Basin Association, the US Army Corps of Engineers at Philpott Lake, Henry County Parks and Recreation Department, The City of Martinsville Parks and Recreation, Henry County and the City of Martinsville.

## Other planning assistance

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The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) was founded in 2002 with the mission to protect and promote the natural and cultural resources of the Dan River Basin through education, recreation and stewardship. The Dan River Basin covers 3,300 square miles and reaches 16 counties in Virginia and North Carolina. DRBA protects the quality of our region's drinking water, provides educational opportunities for thousands of students, and builds trails and river accesses so people can get outdoors and get healthy.

