

A scenic landscape photograph of the Shenandoah River. The river flows from the background towards the foreground, surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The sky above is a clear, pale blue.

Raymond R. “Andy” Guest Jr. Shenandoah River State Park Master Plan Update

Public Information Meeting
May 13, 2025



Housekeeping

- **Sign-In Sheets**
- **Restrooms and Exits**
- **Meeting Space Time**
- **Materials will be posted to DCR website after the meeting**



Housekeeping

- Additional comments will be received until June 12, 2025
- The presentation PDF and meeting materials will be made available after the meeting on the project website
- Links to contact information and websites will be given at the end of the presentation
- Please hold questions until the end of the presentation



Agenda

- Welcome to the Park
- DCR Mission
- Master Plan Process
- Park Background and Existing Conditions Overview
- Public Input
- Next Steps and Wrap Up

Welcome to the Park



Meeting Purpose

In conformance with State Park Master Plan requirements, the purpose of this meeting is to:

- share project process and objectives**
- present existing site conditions and analysis**
- give the public an opportunity for comment**

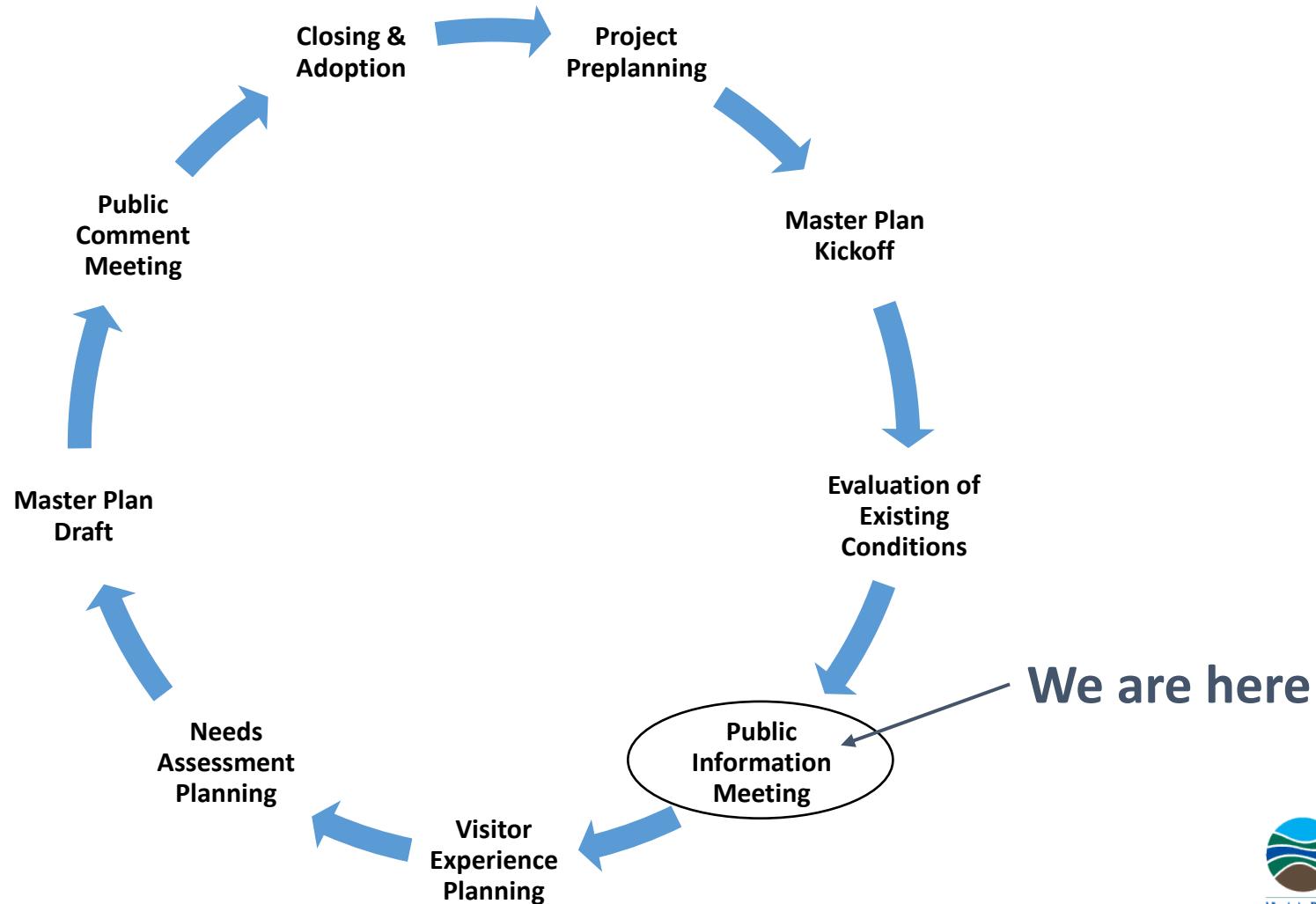


What is a Master Plan?

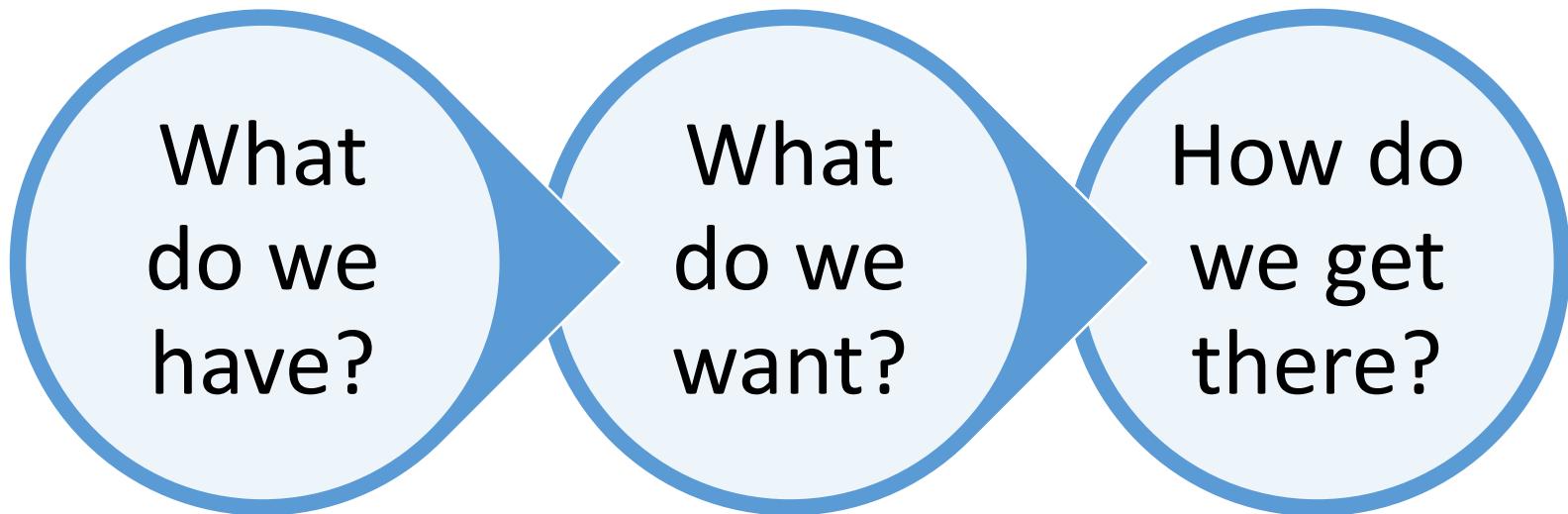
- Pursuant to Virginia State Code all state parks must have a master plan
- Identifies natural, cultural, and physical resources as well as park needs and visitor experiences
- Highlight what makes the park unique in the state park system
- Goal to create a functional, long-range master plan that guides future development and management of the park
- Develop park mission statement and goals



Master Planning Process



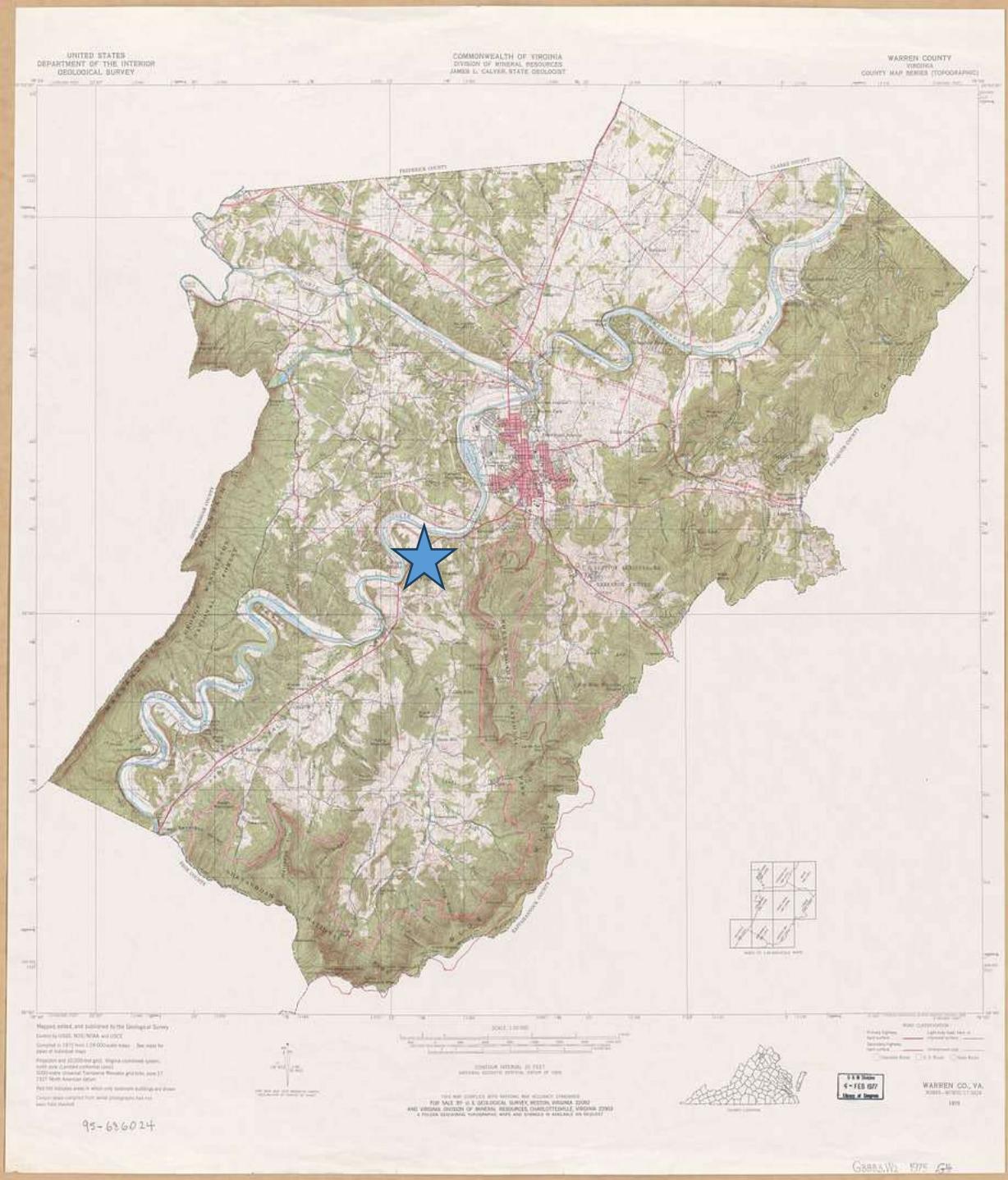
Master Plan Vision



Public Outreach & Engagement

- Public meetings
 - Public Information Meeting (tonight)
 - Public Comment Meeting
- Advertisement & Notification
 - Newspapers
 - DCR social media posts
- 30-day comment periods
- Public Outreach
 - Online survey
 - Project website





Park Background

- 1992 Bond referendum – add 4 new parks
- Three-county search identified this site.
- Jeni tract (922 acres) acquired in 1994
- Other tracts – Maddox tract (171 acres), Hidalgo tract (7 acres), Parsall tract (22 acres), Culler tract (484 acres) and Norfolk and Southern tract (about 15 acres)
- Land use was primarily farming and livestock pasturage



Park Background

- Delegate Raymond R. “Andy” Guest Jr.’s name added in 1995 to honor long standing support of Virginia State Parks
- First master plan adopted 2001 updated 2011
- Received Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) in 2001 and 2006 for park development



Resources Review

What Makes The Park Special

- **Cultural Resources**
- Natural Resources
- Physical Resources





Cultural History

- Rich history from early Indigenous peoples to 20th Century land use.
- Archaeological sites reflect Indigenous pre-Contact life, including temporary camps and toolmaking sites.



Archaeological Significance

- Archaeological surveys have identified Early Archaic to Late Woodland sites, mainly temporary camps or tool-making sites.
- Artifacts include lithic flakes, tools, pottery, and fire-cracked rocks.
- Sites typically near ridges, especially near rock outcrops.



Potential for Future Discoveries

- Large areas of the park remain untested.
- Permanent camps are likely on floodplains and river terraces, which reflects known settlement strategies on flat, fertile areas.
- Proximity to Flint Run Archaeological District and Thunderbird site means likely early Paleoindian sites.



Historic Era Features

- 18th Century historic homestead.
- The former Hall's Mill (c.1860s-1940s).
- Nearby Battles of Front Royal and Buckton Station (May 1862), the latter including troop movements across McCoy's Ford on current park land.
- 20th Century mainly dominated by agricultural and recreational uses.

Resources Review

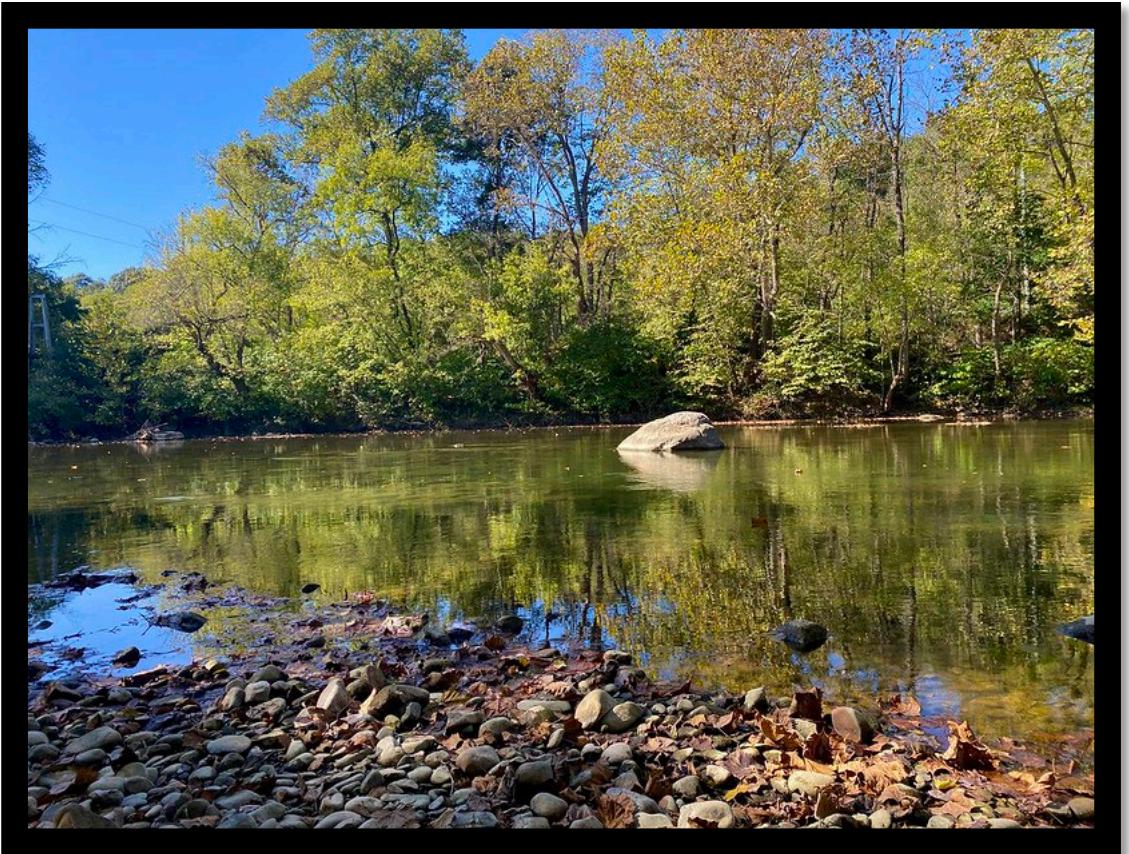
What Makes The Park Special

- Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Physical Resources



Natural Resources Overview

- **Resources:**
 - Watersheds
 - Floodplains
 - Soils
 - Wetlands
 - Ecological Cores
 - Ecosystems & Unique Management Areas (UMAs)
 - Sensitive Species
- **Resource Management Priorities**



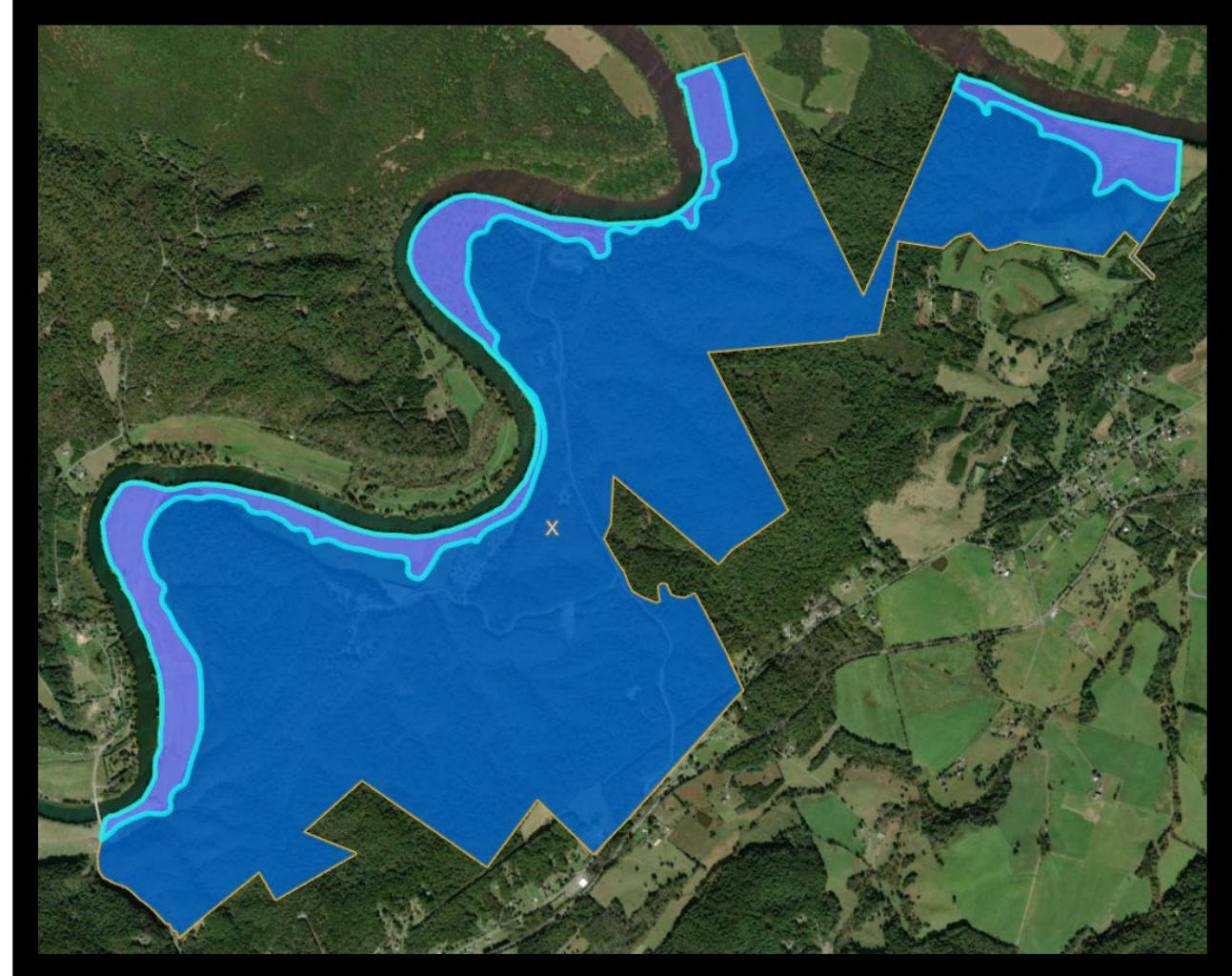
Natural Resources

Watersheds:

- Park wholly within the Potomac River/Shenandoah River watershed

Flood Zones:

- ~1416 acres of parkland are categorized by minimal flood hazard
- ~209 acres along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River are classified as a Riverine Special Flood Hazard Area, and are equivalent to the 100 year floodplain



Natural Resources

Soils:

- Over 10 soils have been mapped on the property; dominated by varieties of loam soils.
- The most prevalent soil is Weikert-Berks channery silt loam ~951 acres.

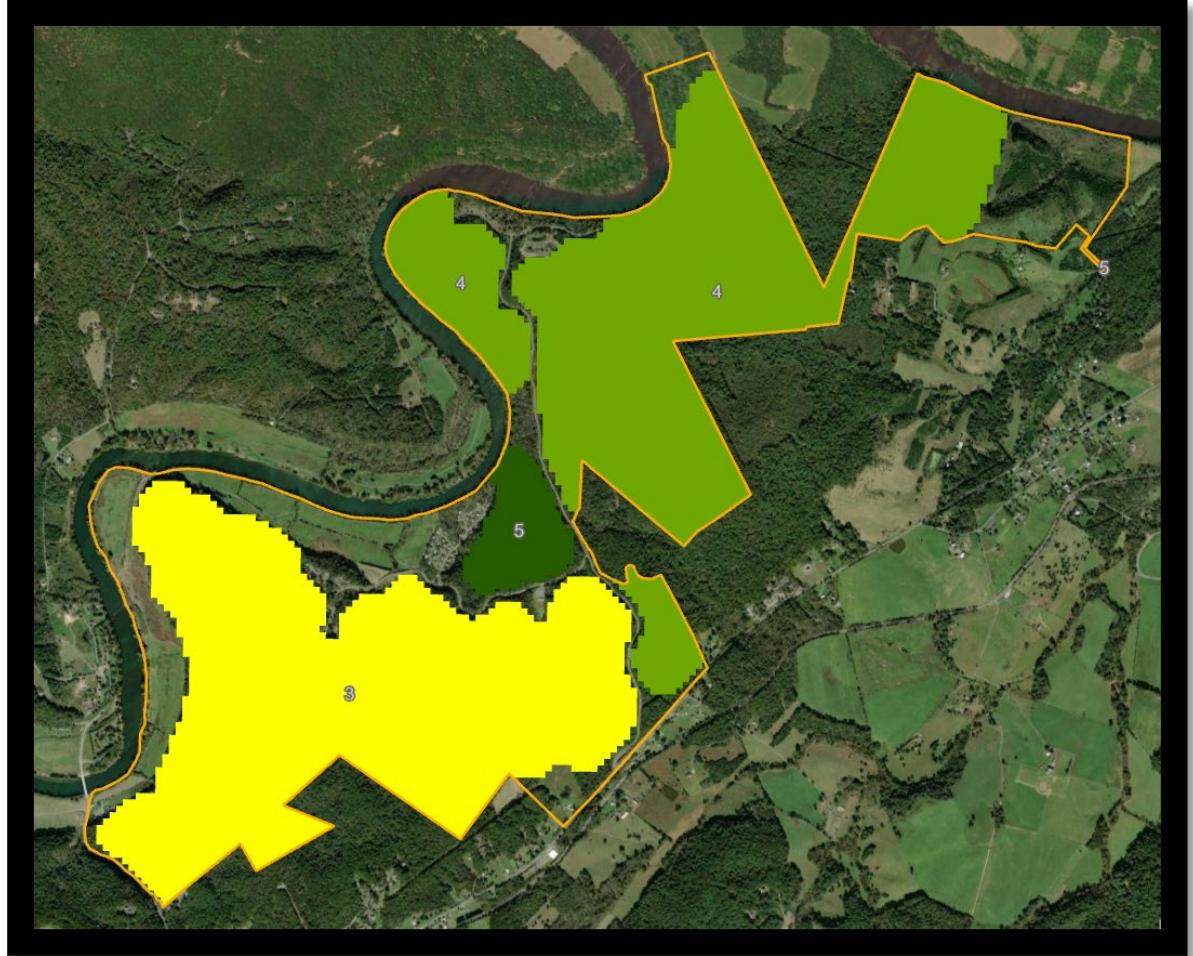
Wetlands:

- ~3.7 acres of Freshwater Emergent Wetlands along streams and inlets of the Shenandoah River.
- ~0.7 acres of Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands along the Cottonwood Trail in the northern part of the park.



Ecological Cores

- From the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment (VaNLA) developed by the DCR Division of Natural Heritage.
- Much of the Park is currently classified as a C3 Core of High Significance (yellow) or C4 Core of Moderate Significance (light green).
- To the extent possible, ecological continuity and integrity should be prioritized in these areas.



Native Upland Ecosystems

- **7 Key Ecosystems:**
- Acidic Oak-Hickory Forest (907 acres)
- Oak/Heath Forest (257 acres)
- Piedmont/Mountain Floodplain Forest (58 acres)
- Eastern White Pine-Hardwood Forest (45 acres)
- Central Appalachian Shale Barrens (28 acres)
- Basic Mesic Forest (22 acres)
- Montane Depression Wetland (<1 acre)



Credit: TN-KY Plant Atlas

Sensitive Species

- Chestnut Lip Fern (*Cheilanthes castanea*):
 - Global Rank: Secure
 - State Rank: Imperiled
- Torrey's Rush (*Juncus torreyi*):
 - Global Rank: Secure
 - State Rank: Critically Imperiled
- Field Chickweed (*Cerastium velutinum* var. *velutinum*):
 - Global Rank: Secure
 - State Rank: Critically Imperiled
- Efforts to avoid, protect and help these species prosper are important considerations for both resource management and planning.



Credits: Gary Fleming, DCR

Sensitive Ecosystems

- **Montane Depression Wetland:**
 - This ecosystem at the park is a 0.3 acre wetland depression located along a ridgeline.
 - Global Rank: None.
 - State Rank: Critically Imperiled.
- **Central Appalachian Shale Barren:**
 - Approximately 28 acres in size, this community includes two different types (e.g. Northern and Calcareous).
 - Global Rank: Imperiled.
 - State Rank: Vulnerable to Imperiled.
- Efforts to avoid impacts to these ecosystems are important planning considerations.



Unique Management Areas (UMAs)

- One large UMA on site, composed of current or former agricultural fields in the floodplain.
- Most currently managed as hayfields.
- Three sections totaling ~17 acres managed by rotational prescribed burning for native warm season grasses, wildflowers and associated benefits to pollinators and grassland birds.



Natural Resource Management Priorities

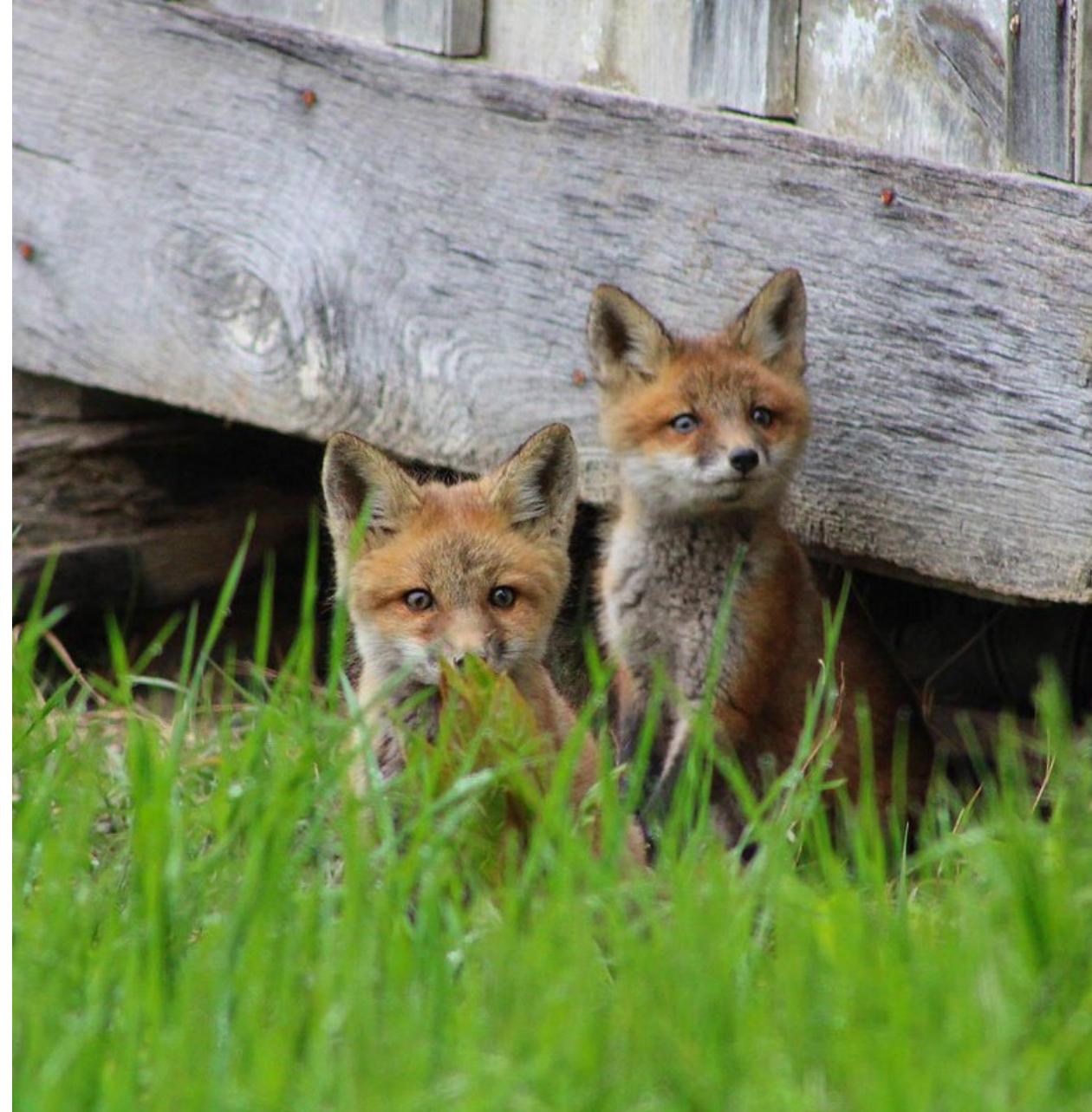
- Treating invasives, especially woody invasive plants such as:
 - Autumn Olive
 - Chinese Privet
 - Multiflora Rose
 - Tree-of-Heaven
- High priority areas for treatment include:
 - Bluebell Trail area
 - Cottonwood Trail area
 - Central Appalachian Shale Barrens
 - Montane Depression Wetland
- Managed hunts for White-tailed Deer to lessen deer herbivory pressures.



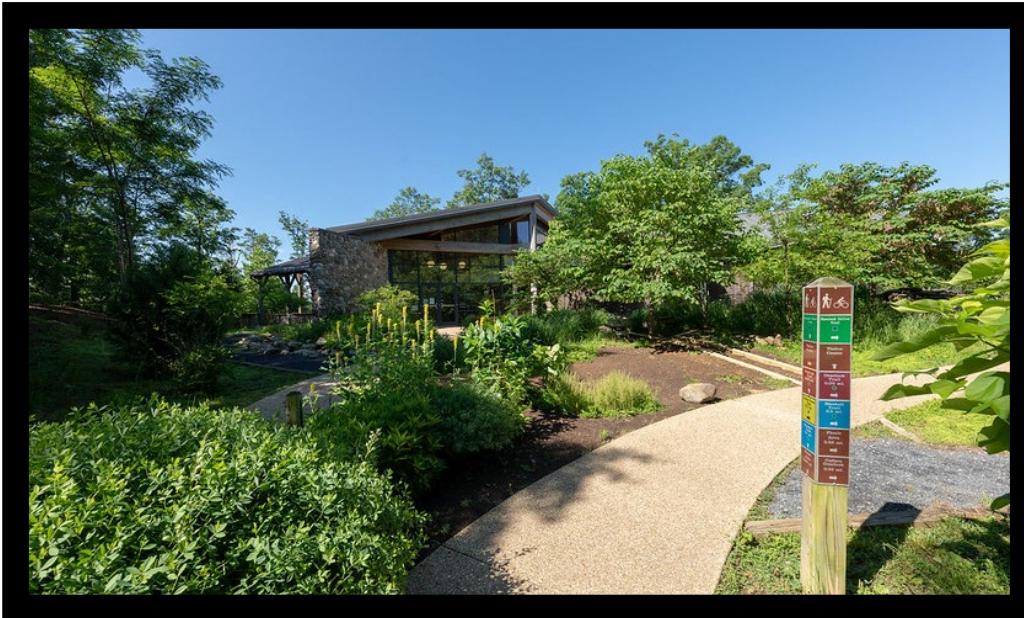
Resources Review

What Makes The Park Special

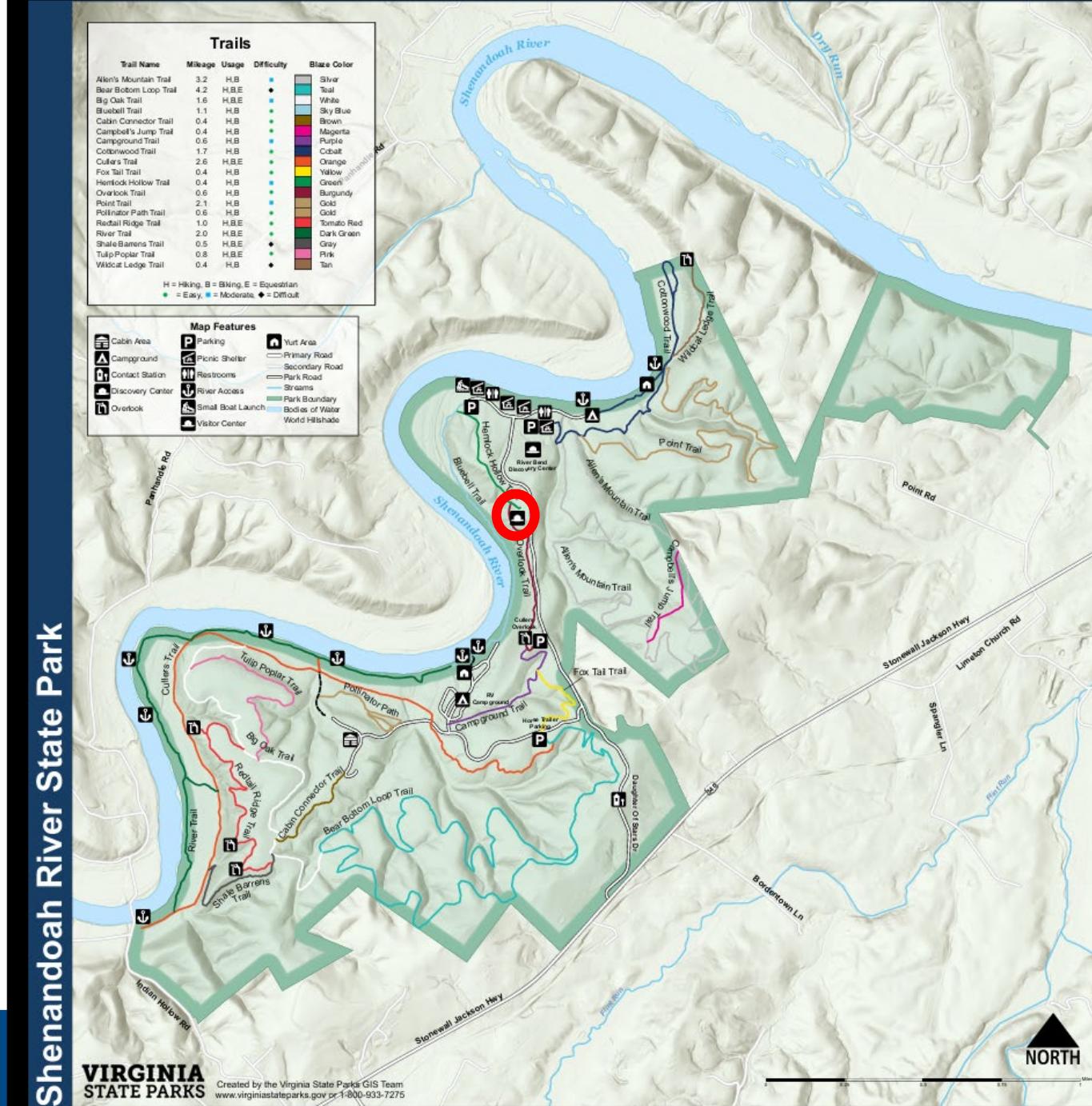
- Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Physical Resources



Visitor Center And Administrative Offices



Shenandoah River State Park

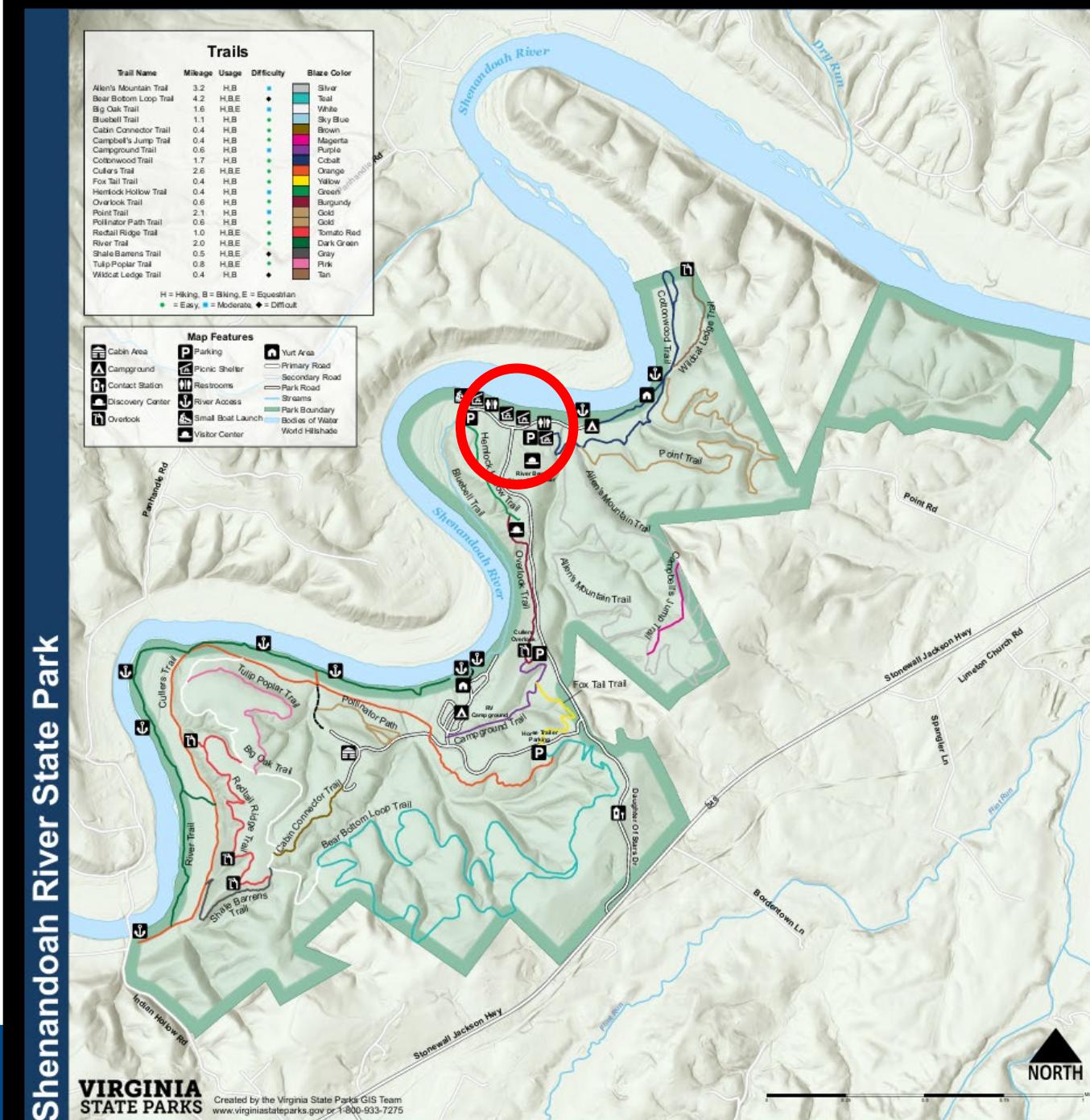


Primary Day Use Area

River Access, Small Boat Launch,
Picnic Shelters and Tables



Shenandoah River State Park

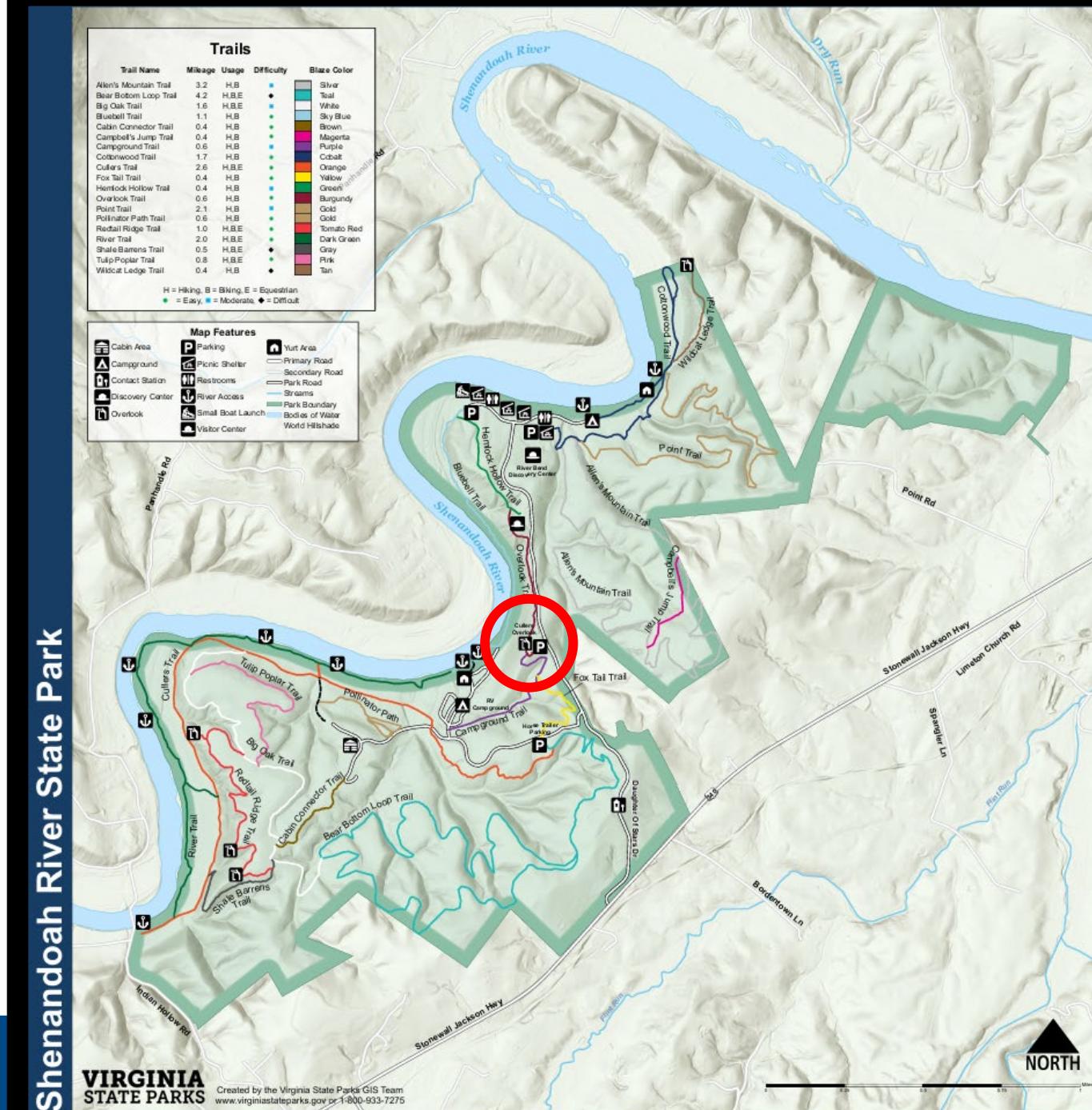


Culler's Overlook

The Best Accessible View in the Park



Shenandoah River State Park

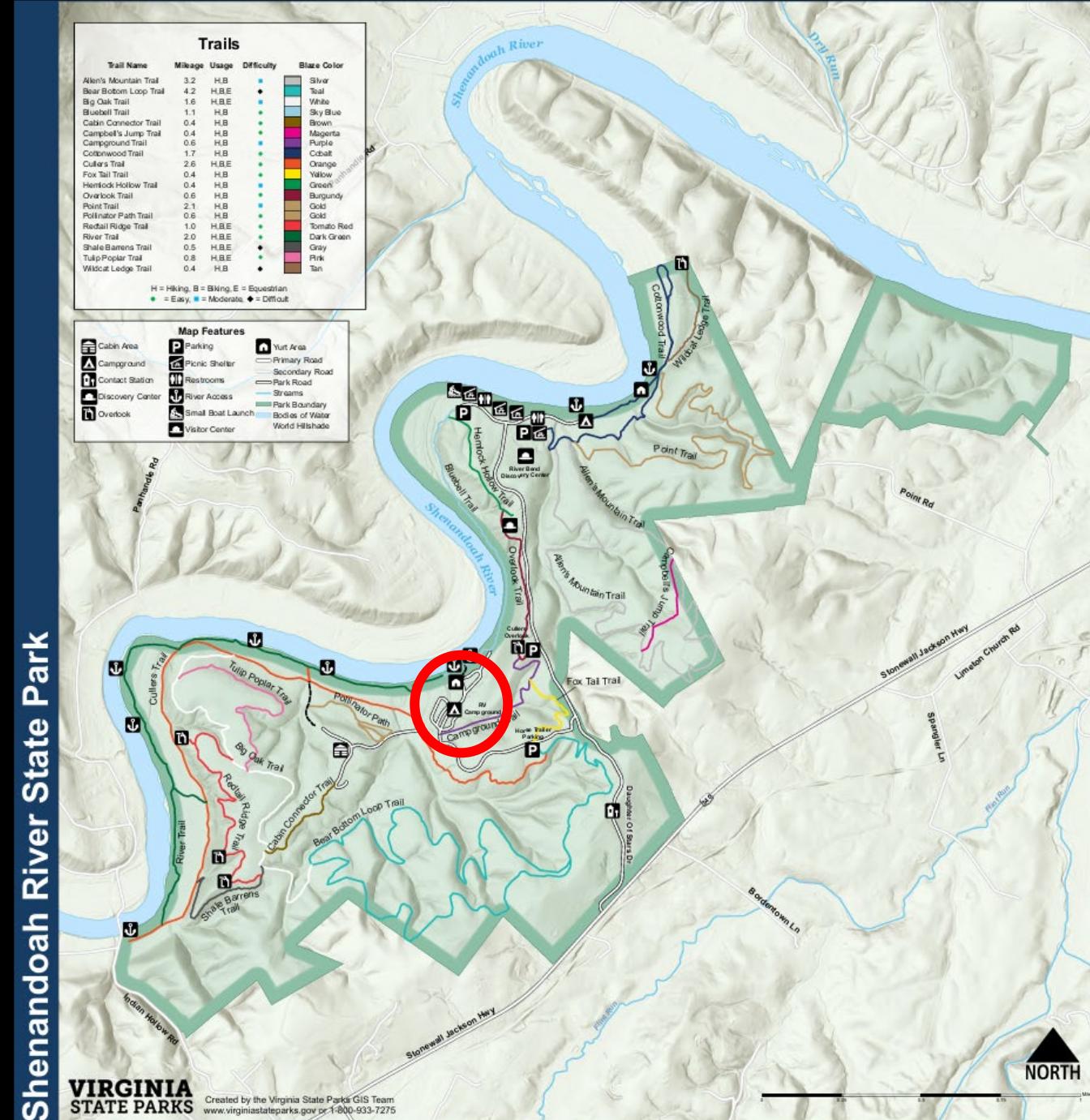


EW Campground

31 Sites, 1 Camp Host Site, 4 Camping Cabins, 1 Yurt, 1 Bathhouse, 1 Dump Station



Shenandoah River State Park

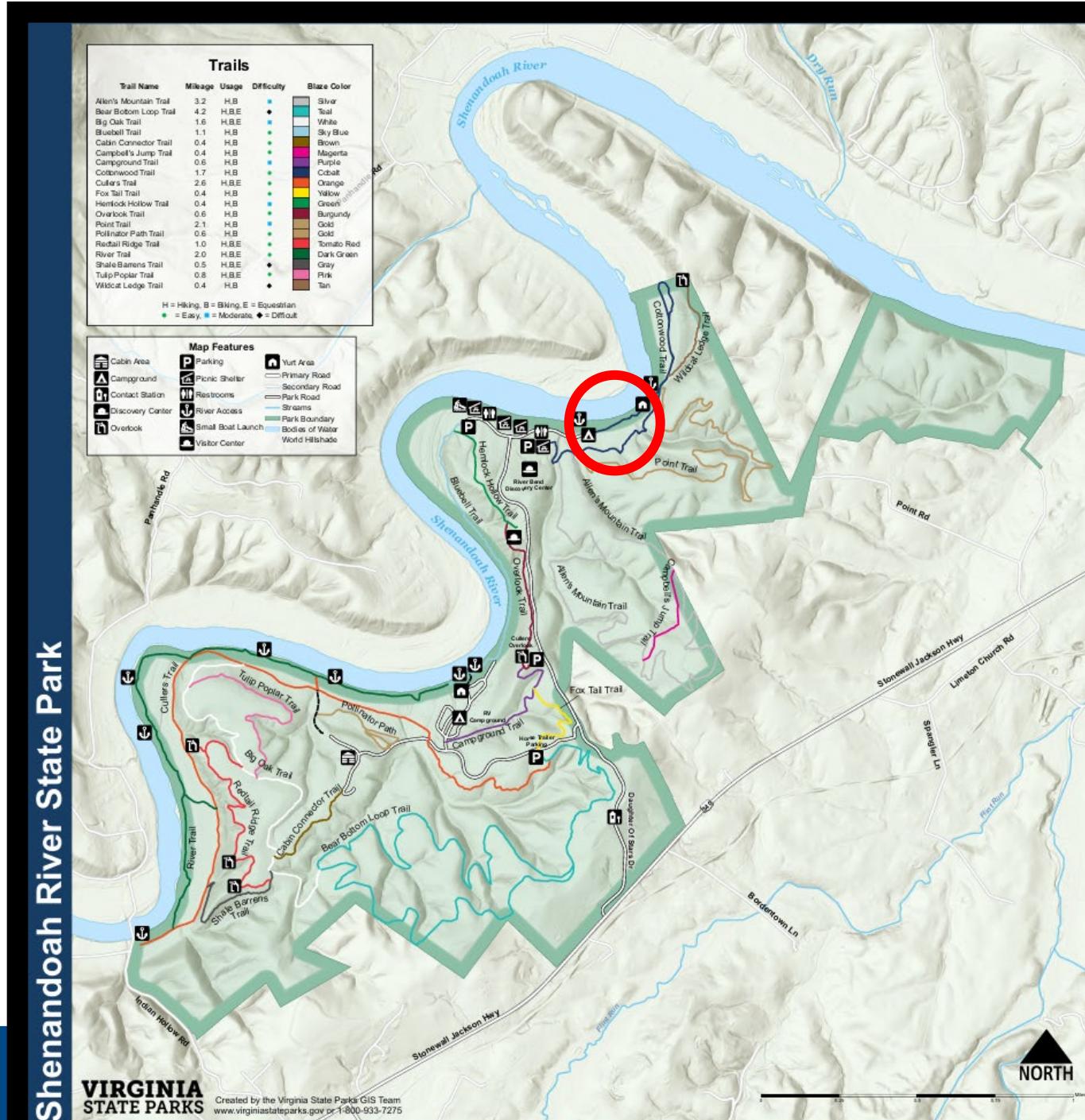


River Right Campground

12 Primitive Sites, 1 Group Camp Site, 2 Yurts, 2 Vault Toilets, and 1 Bathhouse



Shenandoah River State Park

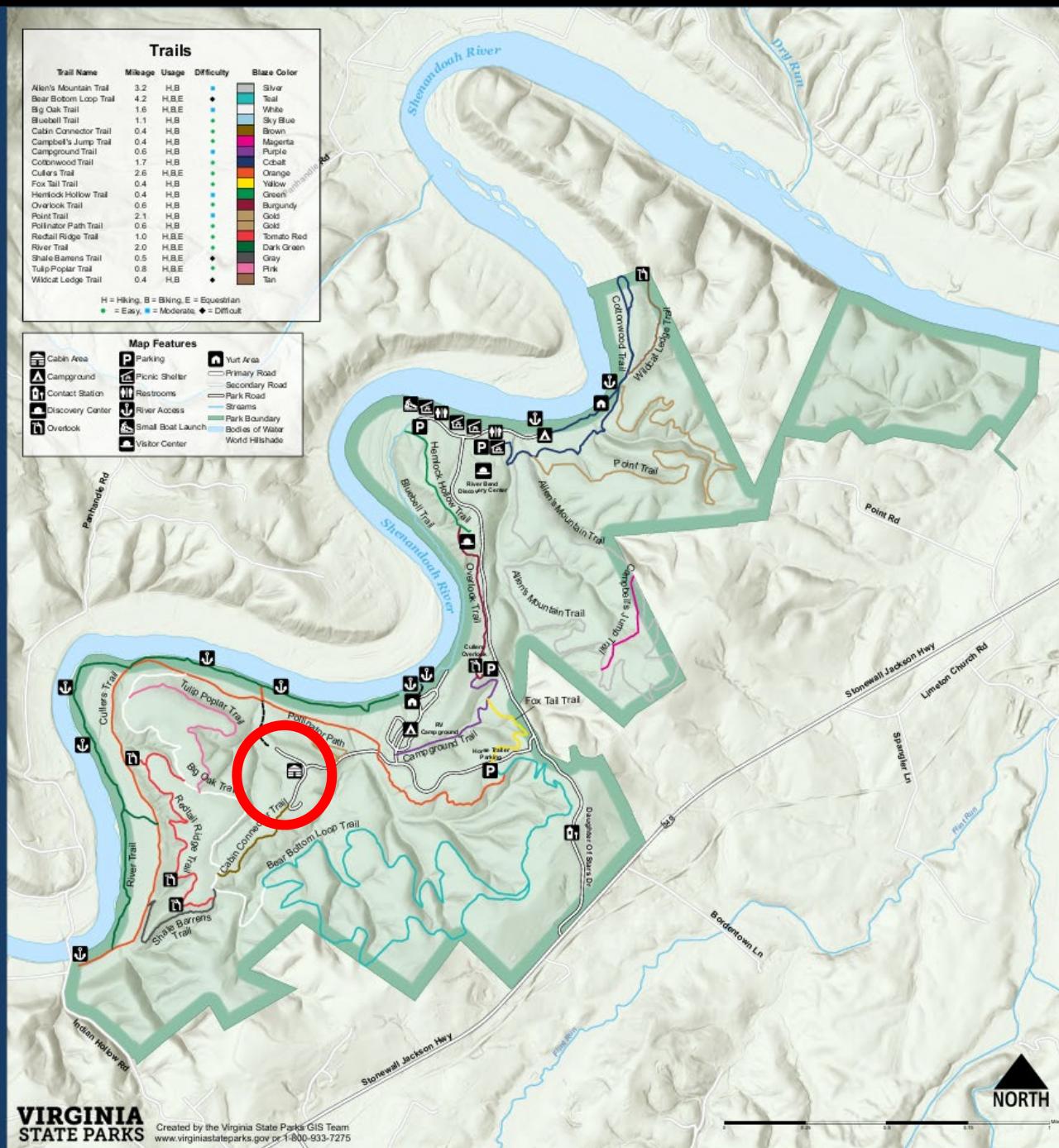


Cabin Loop

9 2-Bedroom Cabins, 1 3-Bedroom Cabin, and 1 6-Bedroom Lodge



Shenandoah River State Park





Trails

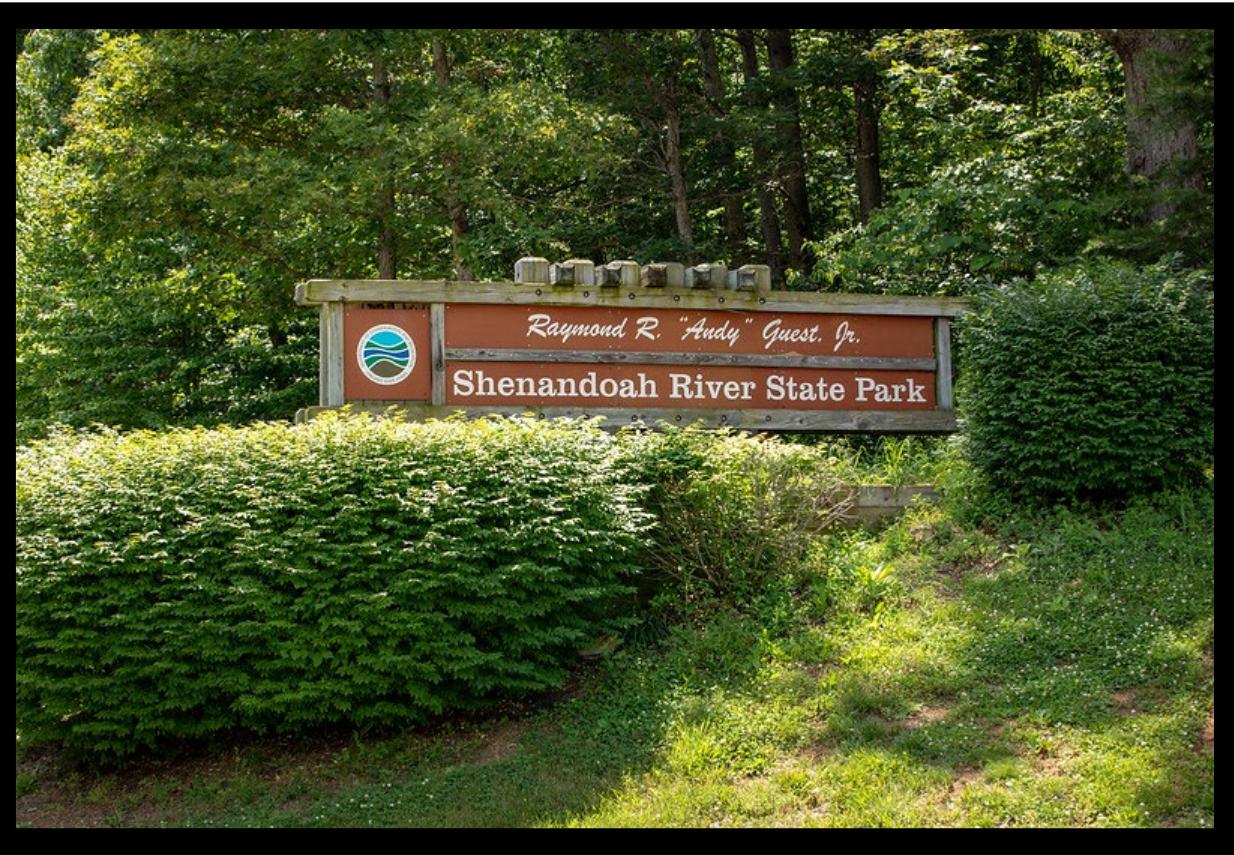
Hiking, Biking, Equestrian

- **19 Total Trails**
 - ~25 total miles
 - All available for hiking and biking
 - 7 trails also available for equestrian use, mostly in the southern and western portions of the park
 - Unique Trails include the Cottonwood Trail (boardwalk) and Bluebell Trail

Other Supporting Infrastructure

Critical Support for the Park

- Riverbend Discovery Center
- Ranger Residence:
 - Park Manager residence
 - A second to be constructed soon
- Maintenance Facility
- Miscellaneous:
 - Contact station, roads, utilities, parking lots, etc.



Demographic and Market Analysis

Understanding both the demographics of the service areas for the park and national and regional recreational trends will help determine the future development of Shenandoah River State Park.

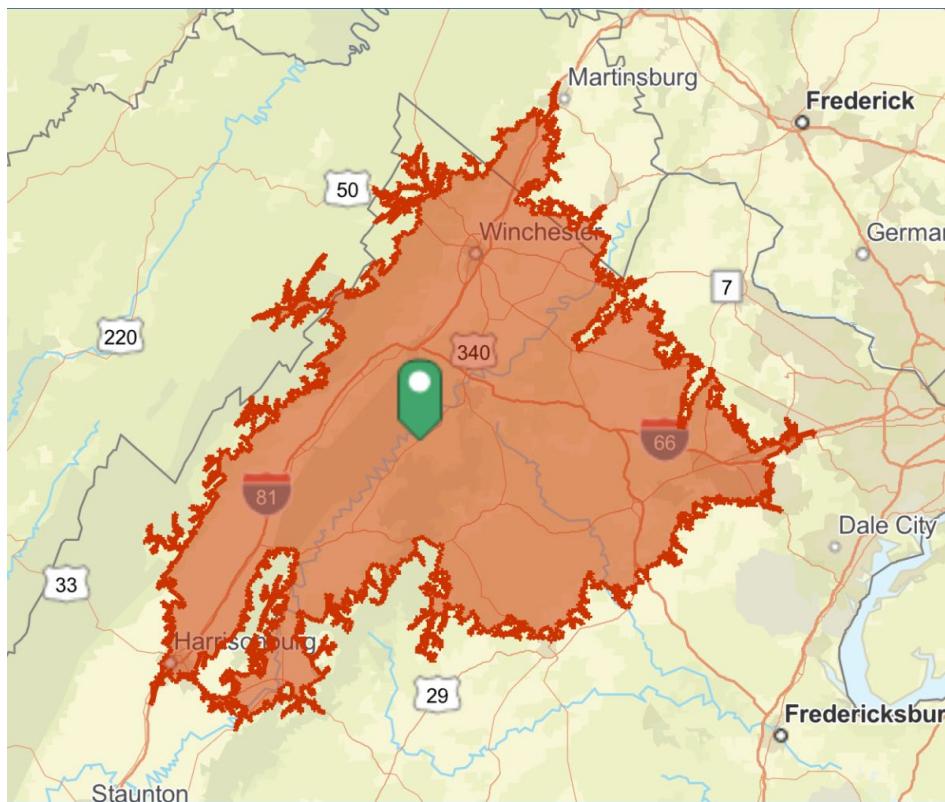


Demographic and Market Analysis

Service Areas

Primary Service Area – 1 hour drive

- 598,854 people



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020). © 2025 Esri

Secondary Service Area – 3 hour drive

- 14.4 million people



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020). © 2025 Esri

Demographic and Market Analysis

Service Areas

Primary Service Area

- Median Age – 39
- Total Households – 226,350
- Median Household Income - \$94,600
- Employment
 - 62% White Collar
 - 21% Blue Collar
 - 17% Services
- Education
 - 29.7% High School Graduate
 - 24.7% Some College/Assoc. Degree
 - 36.5% Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree
 - 9.1% No High School Diploma

Secondary Service Area

- Median Age – 39.2
- Total Households – 5,678,140
- Median Household Income - \$98,360
- Employment
 - 69% White Collar
 - 16% Blue Collar
 - 15% Services
- Education
 - 24.8% High School Graduate
 - 22.2% Some College/Assoc. Degree
 - 45.7% Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree
 - 7.3% No High School Diploma

Recreational Trends

- Participation in outdoor recreation is increasing annually (nationally)
- Walking and Hiking are the most popular outdoor activities

MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITY CATEGORIES

More people participated in most categories of activity in 2022. In fact, 80% of outdoor activity categories experienced participation growth in 2022, including large categories like camping and fishing and smaller categories like sport climbing and skateboarding.

ANNUAL GROWTH IN LARGE OUTDOOR CATEGORIES INCLUDED:



22.9%

GROWTH IN CAMPING TO
51.4 MILLION CAMPERS



22.9%

GROWTH IN HIKING TO
59.6 MILLION HIKERS



22.9%

GROWTH IN FISHING
(FLY, SALT, FRESH) TO
54.5 MILLION ANGLERS



22.9%

GROWTH IN ALL
BIKING CATEGORIES (ROAD,
BMX, MOUNTAIN) TO
54.7 MILLION CYCLISTS

THE FASTEST GROWING CATEGORIES IN OUTDOOR INCLUDED:



21%

ANNUAL GROWTH IN
SNOWSHOEING



12%

ANNUAL GROWTH IN
CAMPING



8.5%

ANNUAL GROWTH IN
CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING



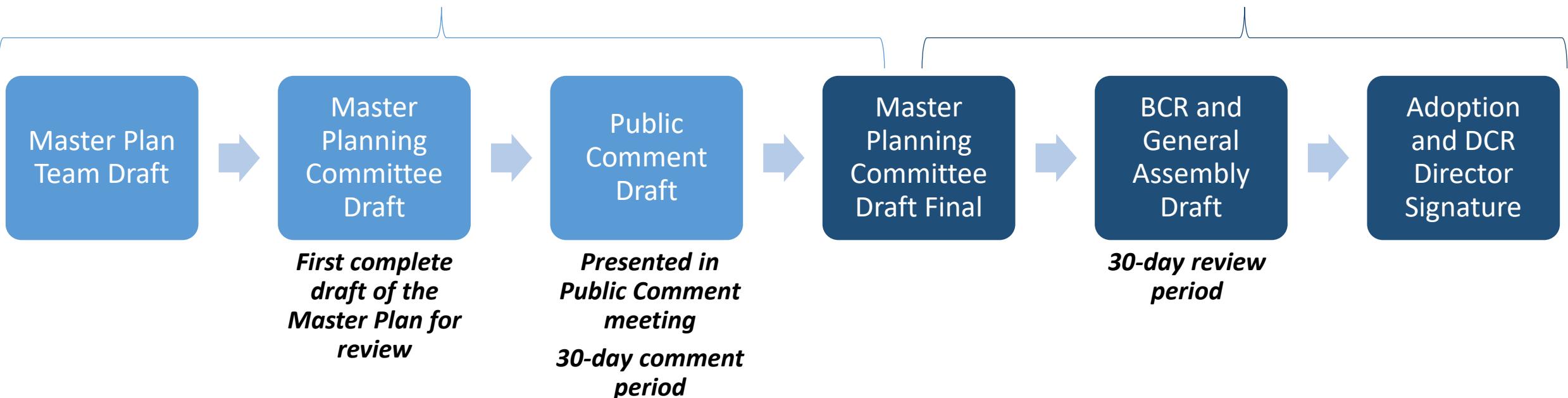
8.3%

ANNUAL GROWTH IN
BMX BICYCLING

Outdoor recreation categories that experienced decline in 2022 included trap and skeet shooting, overnight backpacking, road running, and adventure racing. These categories lost 3.1 million participants in 2022 and have experienced year-over-year declines since 2020.

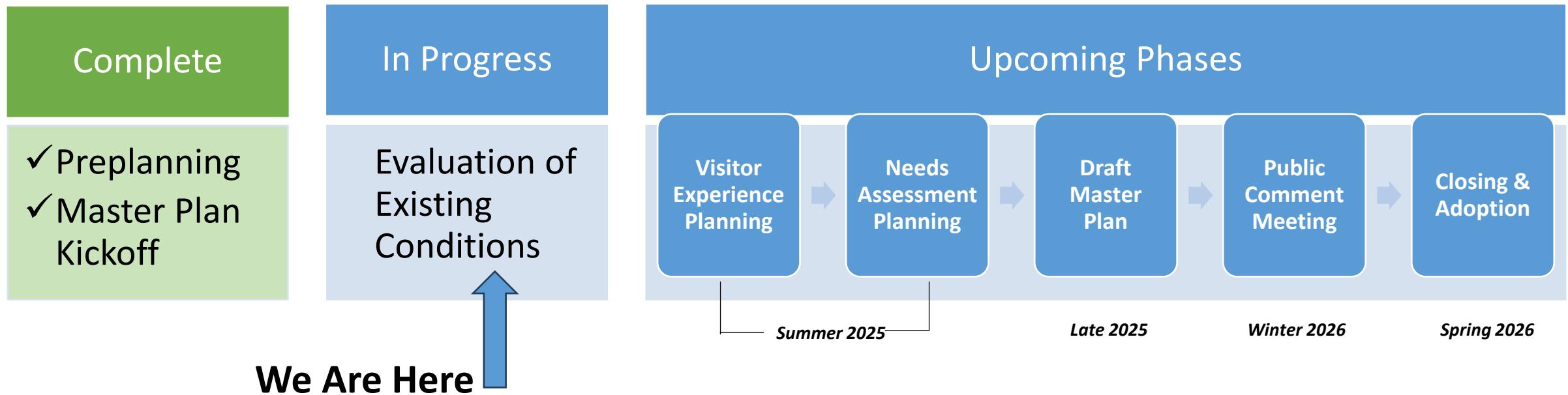
Master Plan Document

DRAFT MASTER PLAN



Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

Master Plan Schedule





Public Comments

We want to hear from you!

- Public comment period for 30 days (June 12, 2025)
- Email
PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov with “Shenandoah River SP Master Plan” in the subject line.
- Your comments count survey
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/other/your-comments-count>





Questions and Next Steps

- Email all comments to PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov with “Shenandoah River SP Master Plan” in the comment line
- Meeting materials and project updates will be posted on the Master Plan project website:
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/sh-masterplan>



Contact Information

Email

PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov

Project Website:

[https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/
recreational-planning/sh-
masterplan](https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/sh-masterplan)

