

State Trails Advisory Committee Meeting



April 29, 2025

Welcome



Agenda

- I. Welcome**
- II. Virginia Outdoors Plan**
- III. Short Break**
- IV. VDOT State Trails Office Update**
- V. Break**
- VI. Member Updates**
- VII. Meet and Greet Presenters**
- VIII. Wrap Up**
 - I. Next meeting – virtual, fall (date to be announced)**
 - II. Thank You!**



Meeting Purpose

This meeting is one of two currently held annually to present relevant, up to date information to the State Trails Advisory Committee. The committee was formed to help facilitate DCR in developing and implementing a statewide system of attractive, sustainable, connected, and enduring trails for the perpetual use and enjoyment of citizens.



VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN 2024

Best in Class Recreation for All

**Presentation for Virginia United
Land Trust Conference and STAC
Spring Meeting**

April 2025





What is the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)?

- A **5-year Commonwealth-wide** planning document
- Supports **grant funding prioritization**
- A **recreation centric** and **conservation-oriented** planning tool
- Includes a recreation-interest **survey of Virginia's residents** (Virginia Outdoors Survey)
- A **Land and Water Conservation Fund** requirement
 - Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

LWCF Act of 1965

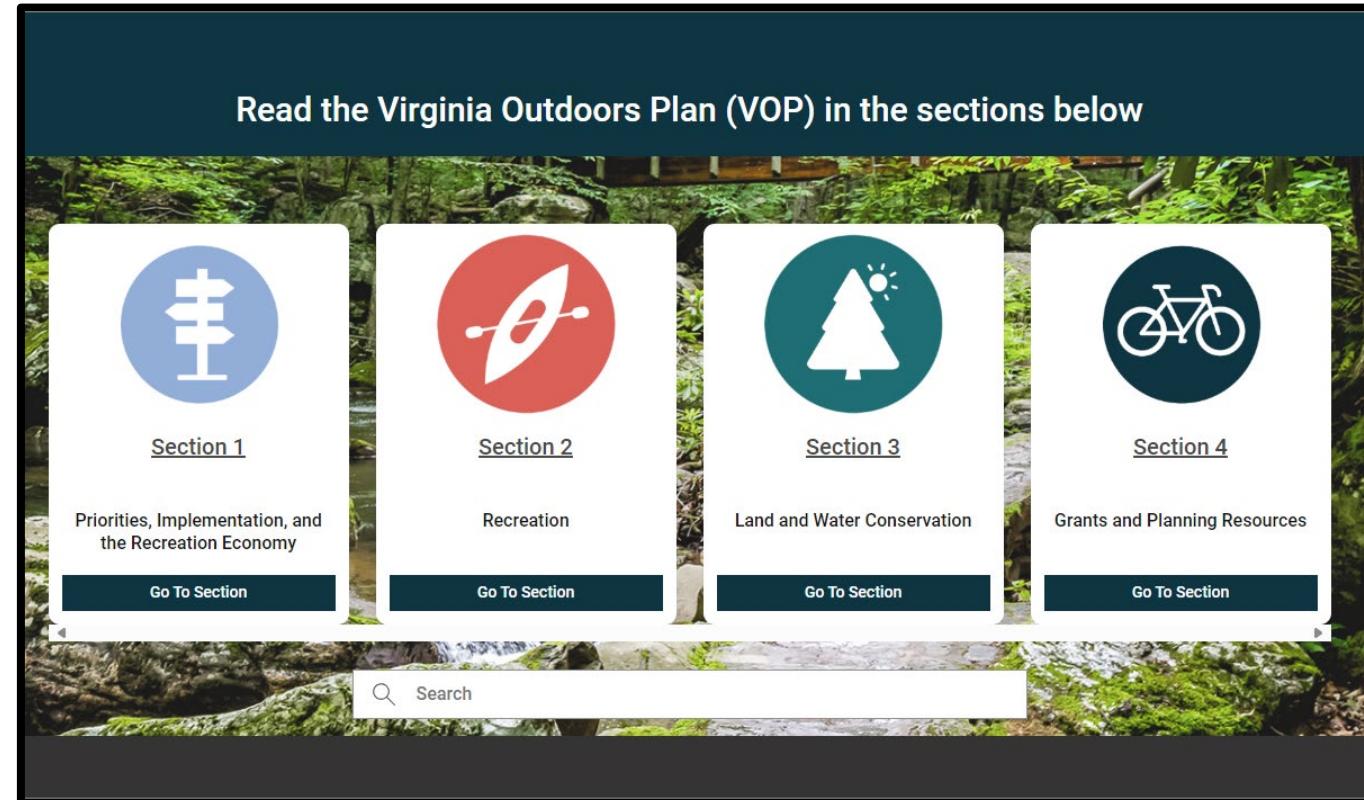
- Administered by the U.S. Department of Interior – National Park Service
- A Federal, State and Local Partnership with a **State Assistance Program**
- Provides matching grants (50/50) for the acquisition and development of **public outdoor recreation areas and facilities**
- Property is **protected in perpetuity** for the purpose of outdoor recreation



The 2024 VOP is Distinctive

Uses tools by the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)

- The **first-of-its-kind** statewide plan, this product is a digital, living document.
 - **Hub Site with StoryMaps**
- Contains the latest linked resources and partnership opportunities to **plan recreation projects and find grants**.
- **Advocates and policy-makers** can easily access the site to learn about current needs across the state.
- Includes the full **Virginia Outdoors Survey (VOS)** report with new tools.

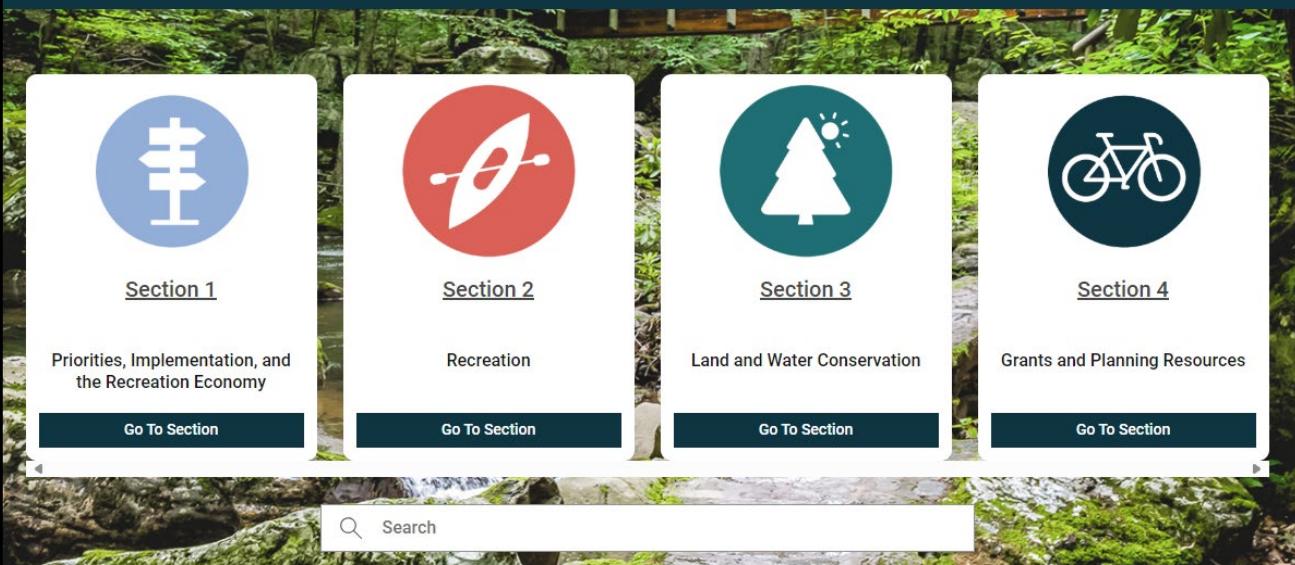


A navigation block on the VOP Home Page

VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN 2024

Table of Contents Survey Results Mapping Resources Library FAQ

Read the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) in the sections below



Components of the VOP

- **Four Sections**
- **Table of Contents** that serves as a site map for users and grant applicants.
- **Survey Results** page with the Virginia Outdoors Survey report (pdf), and 7 data dashboards of regionalized data and statistical findings from the report.
- **Mapping Resources** page with 5 recreation inventory dashboards, and current geospatial planning tools.
- **Library** of published papers and other agency plans used during development of the plan.

The 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey (VOS)



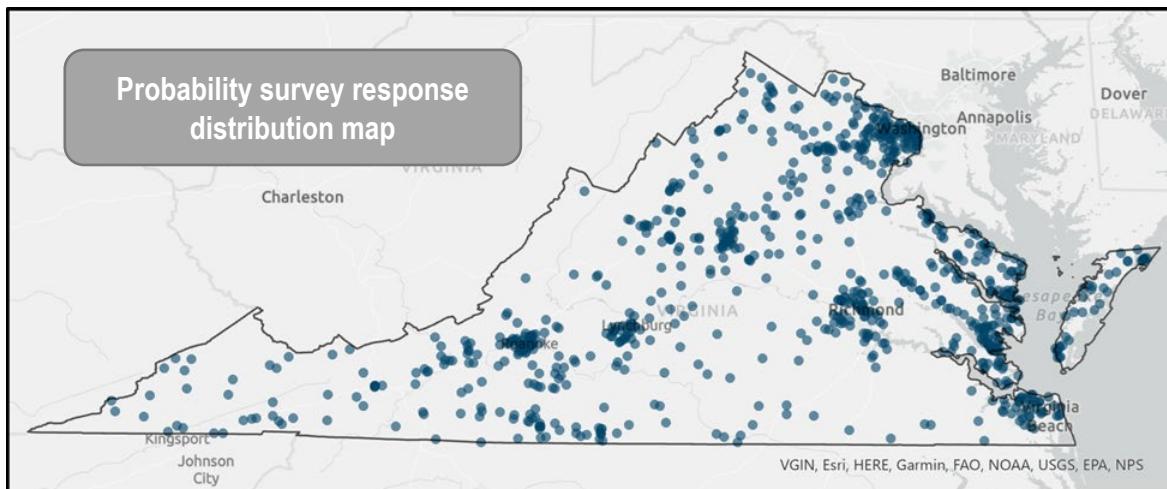
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
CONSERVE. PROTECT. ENJOY.



About DCR State Parks Natural Heritage Soil and Water Conservation Recreation Planning Dam Safety and Floodplains Land Conservation

Virginia Outdoors Survey
What do you like to do outside?

TAKE THE SURVEY



Data-Driven Planning

- Statistical-Probability results for **accurate representation of Virginians**
- Crowd-source online survey captures recreation **interests of the general population** and organized stakeholders
- **Survey results** reveal responses defined by:
 - geography and proximity to recreation
 - demographic variables
 - Recreation activities
 - Values and perceptions on conservation and recreation

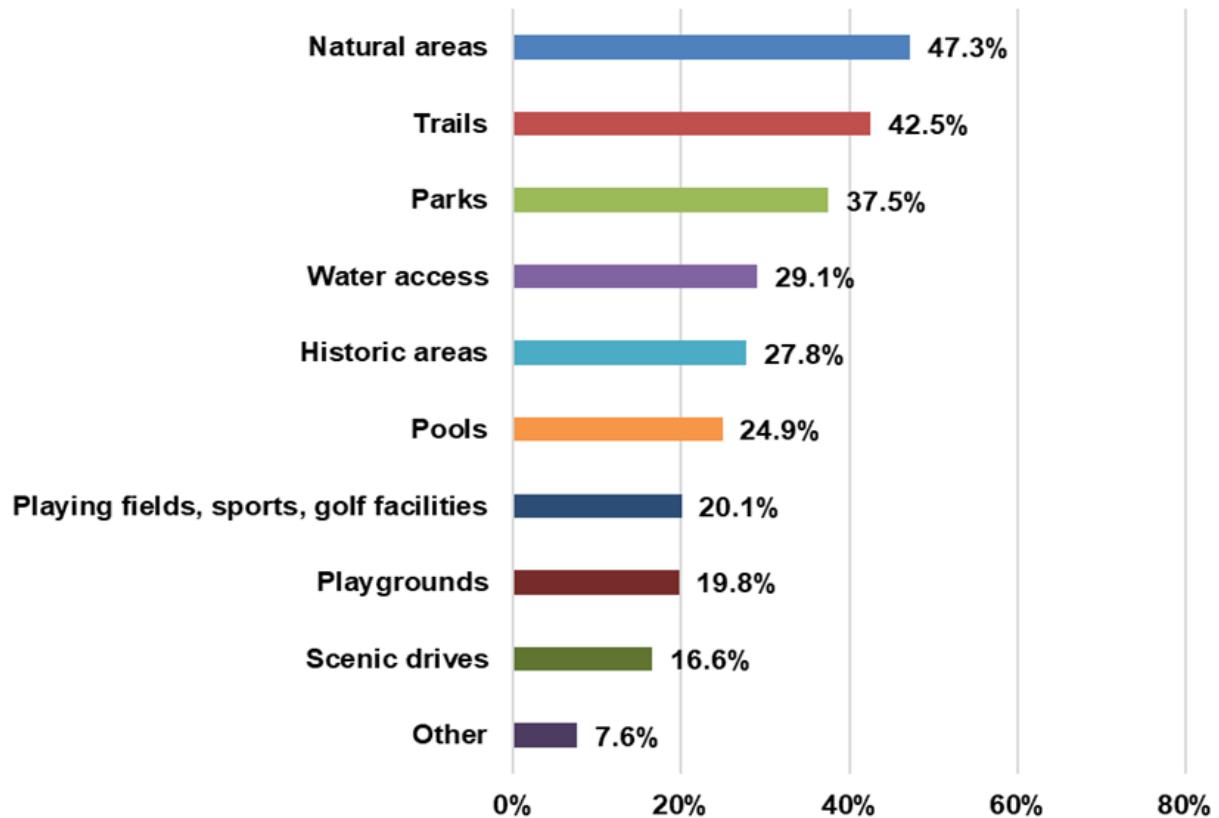


Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

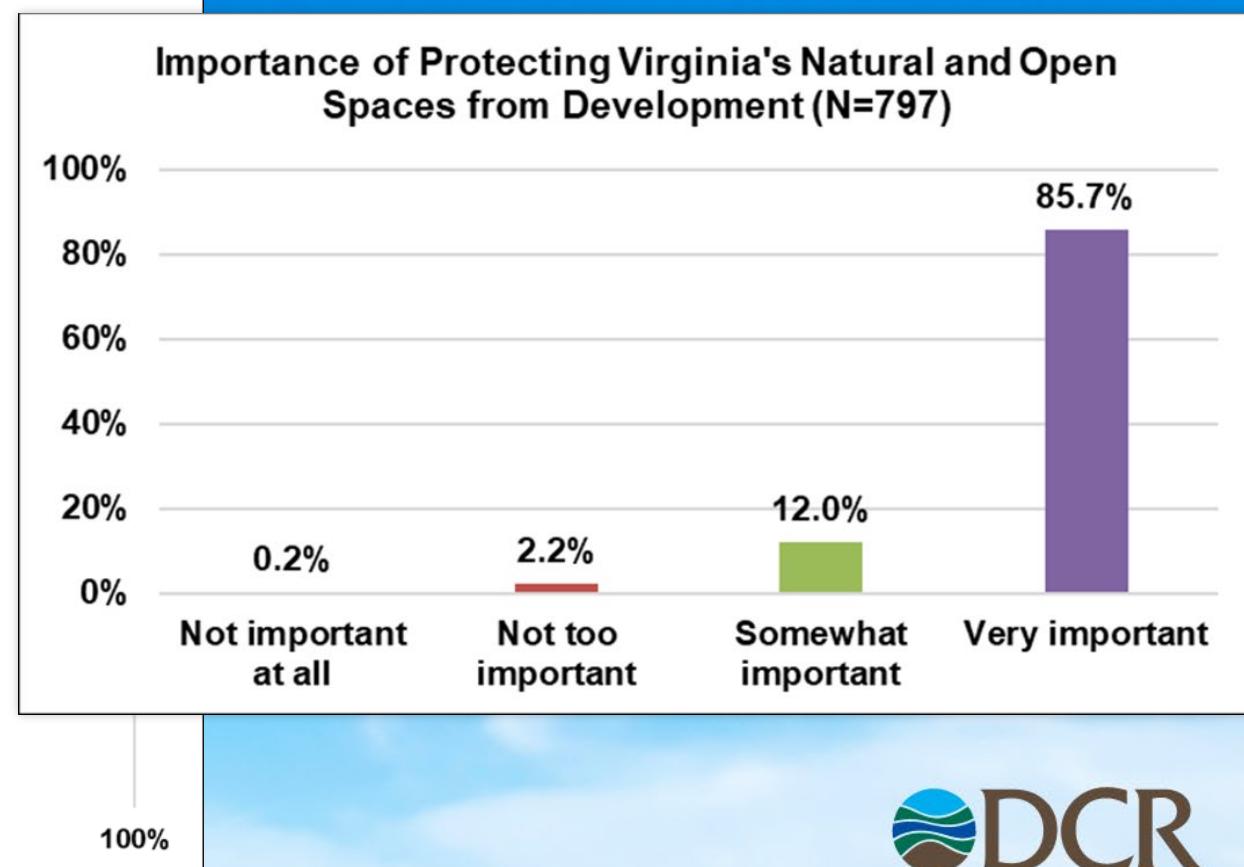
Led by Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Government and Public Affairs - Dr. Jim Ellis

Survey Results - What do Virginians value?

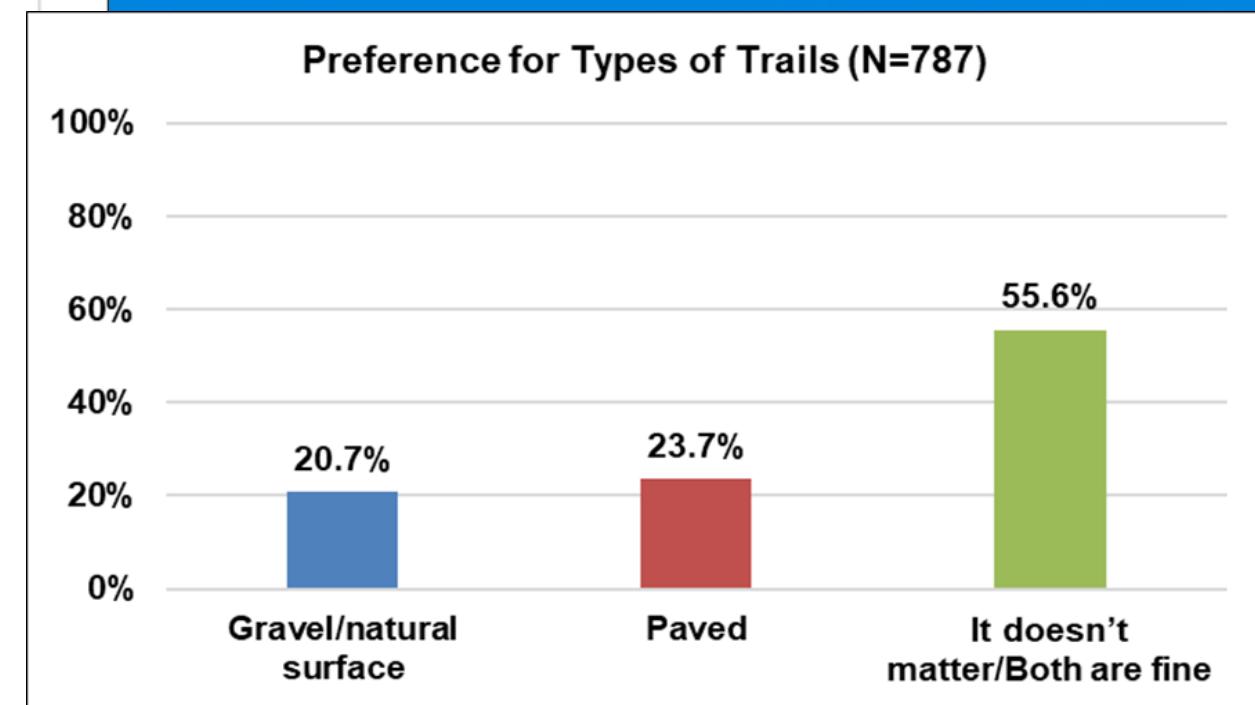
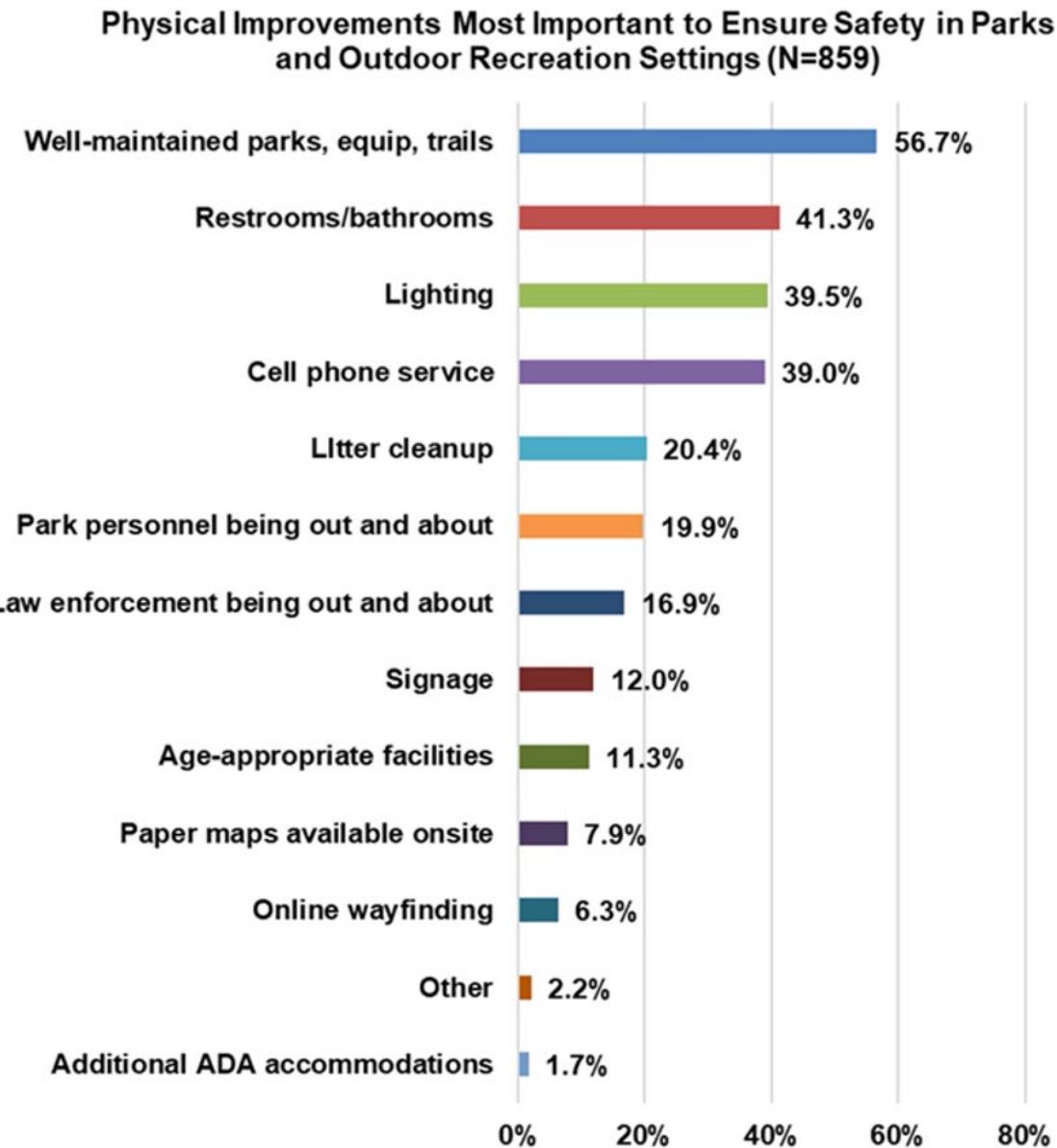
Most Needed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in Virginia (N=793)



Importance of Protecting Virginia's Natural and Open Spaces from Development (N=797)



Survey Results – Opportunities for Improvement





How Can You Use the VOP?

Mapping Resources

- Screen for resources (*i.e. wetlands, ag soils, unique habitats, cultural, etc.*)
- Plan potential development
- Enhance protection including restoration and resources management

Survey Results

- Cite statewide and regional statistics

StoryMaps (Sections)

- Align projects to meet section Recommendations
- Use in-text citations that support the project
- Find partnerships that facilitate statewide efforts in conservation and recreation initiatives

Grants

- Explore a broad variety of programs
- Find guidance on state and federal requirements
(i.e. NEPA, Section 106)

VOP Sections At a Glance - Section 1

Inside the VOP HUB

Key Takeaways

- Summarizes the **overarching priorities** from recommendations in the VOP.
- **Guidance for implementing the plan**, including future documentation, data collection, and deliverables to the VOP Technical Advisory Committee.

Virginia Outdoors Plan - Priorities and Implementation
Section 1.1

Priorities

The following priorities are summaries of the listed recommendations throughout the Virginia Outdoors Plan that guide project selection during the Open Project Selection Process of Land and Water Conservation Fund grant rounds for the next 5 years of implementation. Other state and federal grant programs may also require alignment to the current Virginia Outdoors Plan.

Lastly, these priorities and recommendations guide local Comprehensive Plans, policy, and concurrent funding for conservation and recreation across the state. If Virginia is to meet its goal of best-in-class outdoor recreation, the following needs must be prioritized:

- Demonstrate effective collaboration between recreation resource planners, managers, and community stakeholders.
- Prioritize recreation facilities and amenities that improve recreation experiences for all, reach underserved communities and geographic areas; improve safety; enhance the protection of important natural, scenic, and cultural resources; and make positive impacts to community health.
- Fund and prioritize facilities maintenance and appropriate development on all local and state recreation lands, and plan for the necessary staff and equipment to do the work.
- Improve ecological resiliency and outdoor recreation facilities for long-term resiliency.

Implementing This Plan

The results and progress of VOP implementation will be tracked and measured for the next 5 years.

Metrics will be submitted to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) annually. These metrics will be derived from the documented results in the table below and presented to local, regional and state planners. The TAC will also use this information to measure progress, make future recommendations and propose future VOP priorities.

Priority	Means of Tracking through Documentation
Demonstrate effective collaboration and reporting between recreation resource planners, managers, and community stakeholders.	Use the VOP HUB site to collaborate with recreation planners, grant managers, and community stakeholders.
Document current regional needs in recreation, and common hurdles during grant rounds to adapt assistance and resources that meet local needs.	



Priorities, Implementation, and the Recreation Economy

Section 1

Section 1.1

Priorities and Implementation

[Visit Page](#)

Section 1.2

Economic Impacts of Outdoor Recreation

[Visit Page](#)

Section 1.3

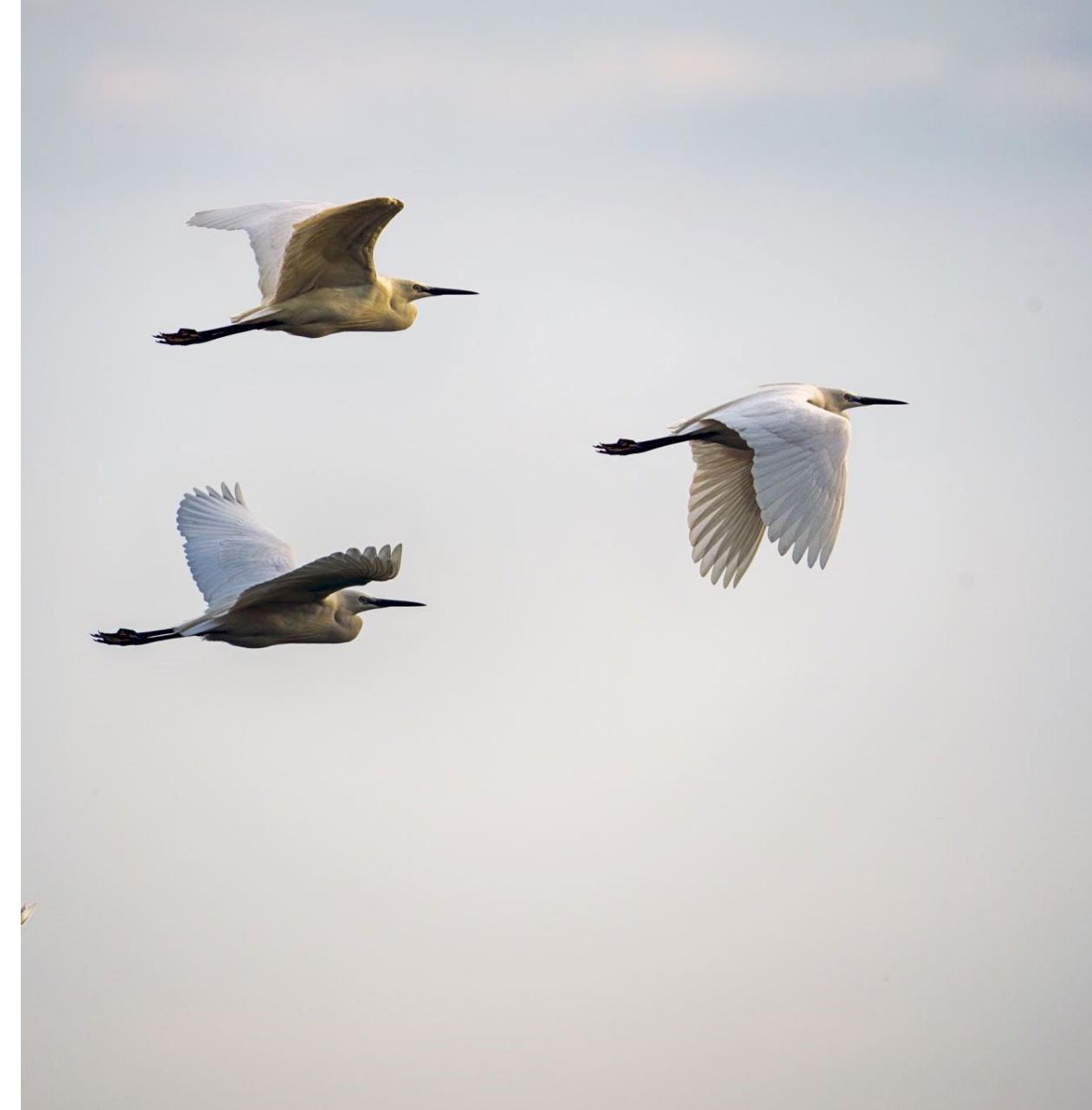
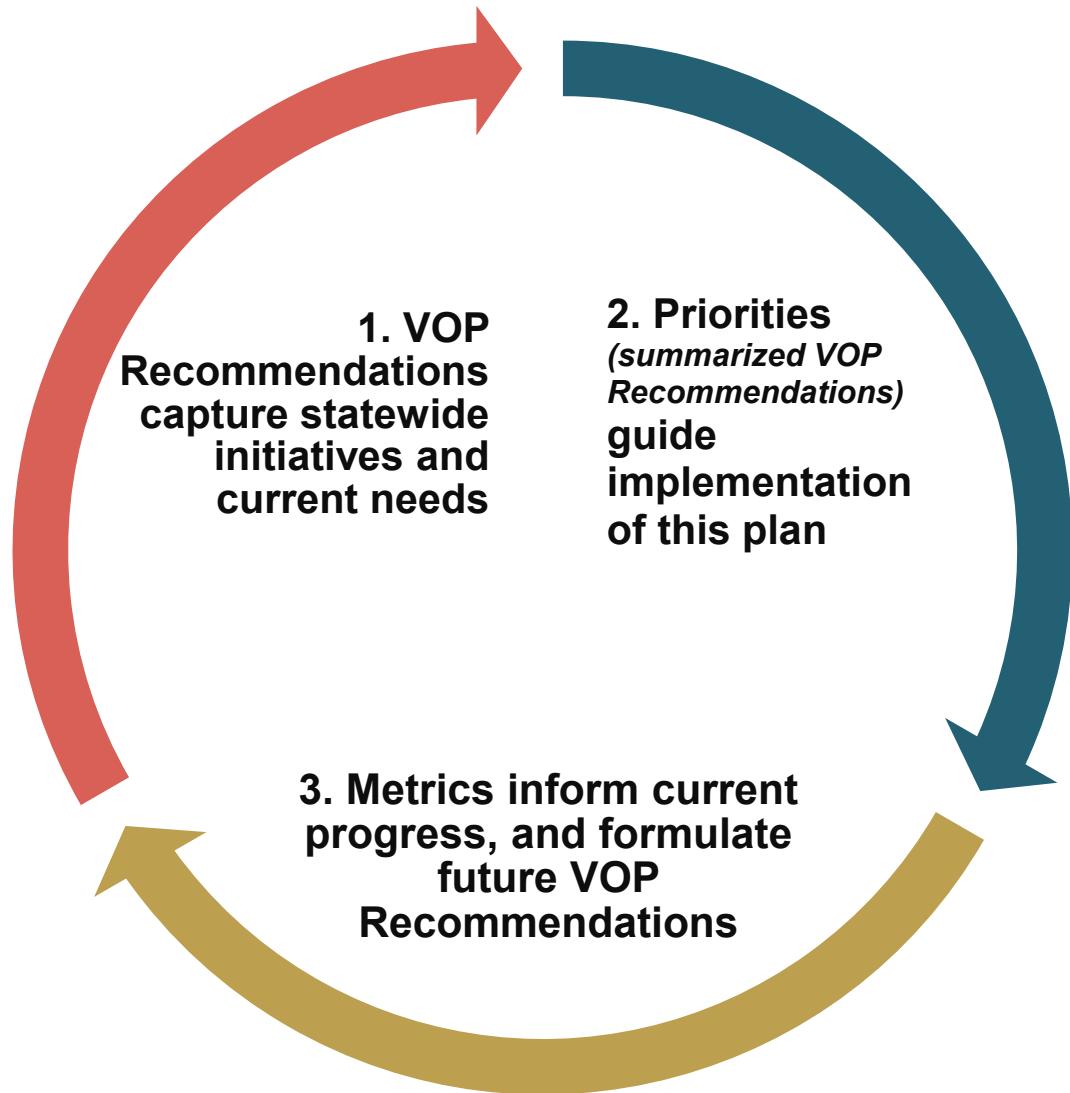
Outdoor Recreation during the COVID-19 Pandemic

[Visit Page](#)

- **Economic data that supports outdoor recreation investment, and a look back at how the pandemic impacted recreation resources in Virginia.**

Section 1

1.1 - Priorities and building metrics





Section 1 - Recreation Economy

1.2 – Includes linked resources for planners

- Virginia Tourism Corporation's Drive 2.0 Statewide Plan
- Economic advantages of protected open space
- Bureau of Economic Analysis Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account data
 - Outdoor recreation contributed \$11.3 billion to Virginia's economy (2023)
- Data from the National Park Service (NPS) on visitor spending in Virginia at NPS lands
 - \$2.3 billion in Economic Output; e.g. Camping \$34.2M, Restaurants \$366M, Recreation industries \$90.4M
- Economic impact of Virginia State Parks
 - Economic activity stimulated by State Parks generated \$35.7M in state and local tax revenues (2023)

Section 2 – Recreation

Key Takeaways

- Focus on **recreation activities**.
- Planning priorities include - **expanding access, safety**, individual and community **health**, and **resiliency**.
- Improving **accessibility** – planning barrier-free entry-to-exit experiences.
- Recreation activities on **trails**, and the current state of trail planning, funding, and needs.

Inside the VOP HUB

Recreation

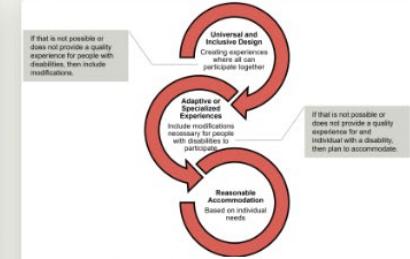
Section 2



Section 2.1 - Recreation For All

A look at how Virginians use outdoor spaces – and what they would like to see added or...

[Read StoryMap](#)



If that is not possible or does not provide a quality experience for people with disabilities, then include modifications.

Universal and Inclusive Design
Creating experiences for everyone to participate together

Adaptive or Specialized Accommodation
Institute modifications necessary for people with disabilities to participate

Reasonable Accommodation
Based on individual needs

Section 2.2 - Accessible Outdoor Recreation

This planning resource can be used for discussing accessibility in the outdoors,...

[Read StoryMap](#)



Section 2.3 - Trails

Planning and Building Trails Networks in Virginia.

[Read StoryMaps](#)

Providing Accessible Outdoor Recreation

Section 2.2

Virginia offers a wealth of outdoor recreation experiences. Public outdoor spaces provide options for many to enjoy, but these opportunities have not always been available to people with disabilities.

This planning resource can be used for discussing accessibility in the outdoors, outlines common barriers people with disabilities may encounter in the outdoors, and provides best practices and resources to help improve access to outdoor recreation environments for all.

[Page Menu ▾](#)

[Entry-to-Exit Experience](#)
[Identifying Barriers](#)
[Common and Potential Barriers](#)
[Quick Improvements to Reduce Barriers](#)
[Definitions table](#)
[Additional Resources](#)



A Best-Practice Framework to Planning for Accessibility

Providing Accessible Outdoor Recreation

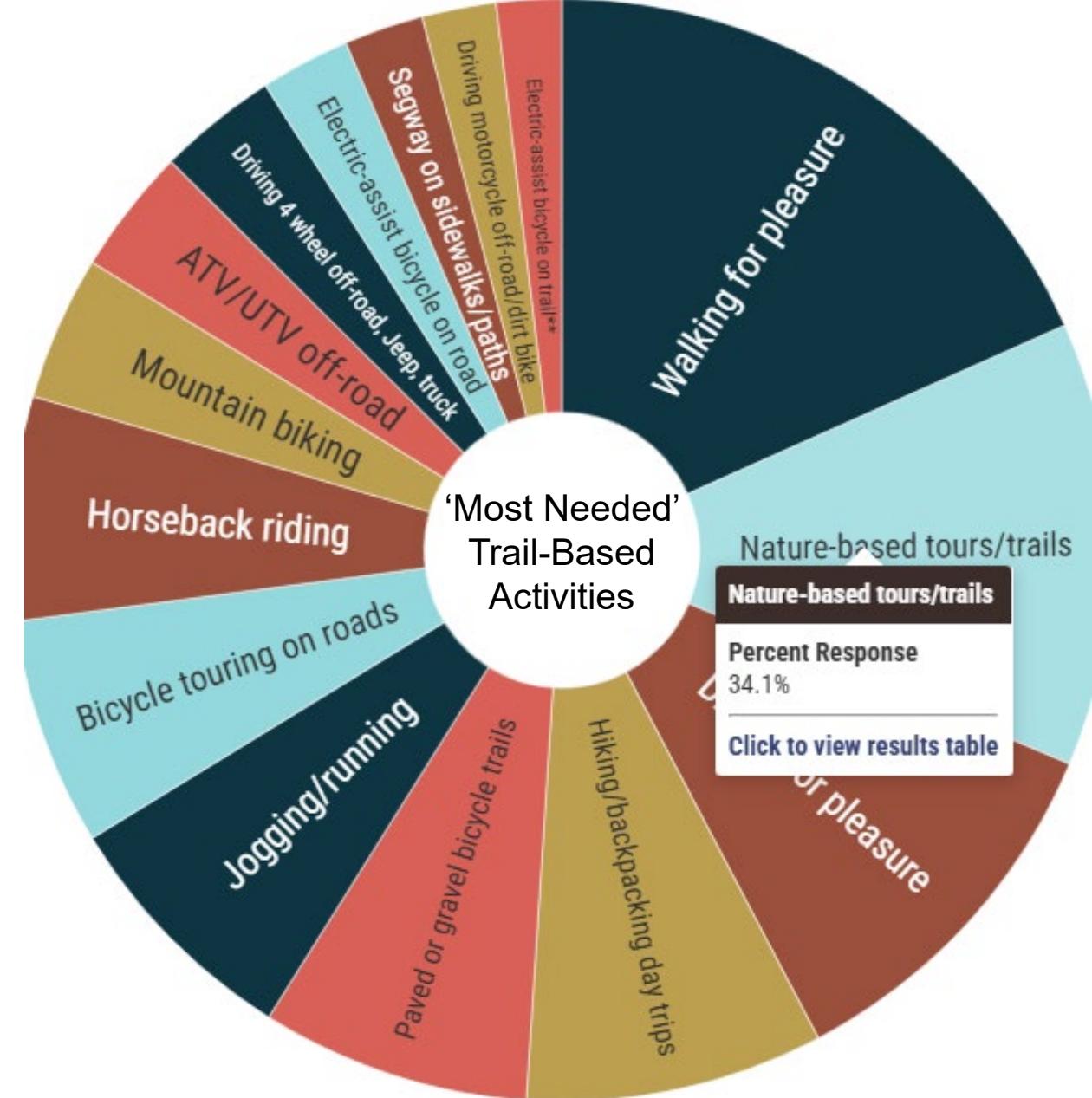
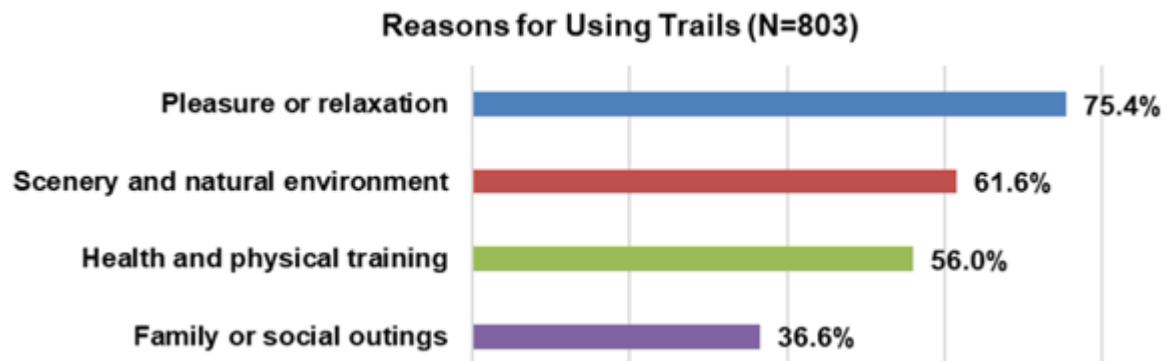
[Read More](#)

Section 2

Section 2.1 - Using survey results and in-text citations

Expanding Trail Networks (2.1.4)

- “Trails allow for walkable communities and access to nearby recreation.”
- “The journey to the recreation area is part of the recreation experience.”
- “Surveyed Virginians indicated that park access from neighborhood trails (22.3%), and easy-to-walk, paved trails (42.7%) could improve participation in outdoor recreation.”



Section 3 – Conservation

Key Takeaways

- Focus on **protection and stewardship** of private and recreation lands and waters.
- **Descriptions and examples** of conservation and preservation projects and partnerships.
- A view of Virginia's **Public Access Lands** for all related agencies and partners.
- Conservation programs that serve all to have a **resilient future**.
- How a **Conservation Conscience** leads to protecting lands and ecological assets for all to enjoy.

Inside the VOP HUB

Land Conservation Section 3

Section 3.1 - Recreation Land Conservation
Recreation and Stewardship on Virginia's Public Owned Lands
Read StoryMap

Section 3.2 - Land Conservation Programs
How we can leverage Open-Space Easements, Conservation Easements, and federal...
Read StoryMap

Section 3.3 - Conservation Conscience
Using Conservation Conscience to become Best in Class
Read StoryMap

Introduction Virginia's Public Access Lands Survey Results Foster Positive Experiences Becoming More Resilient Recommendations

Introduction

Our Recreation Land

3.1.1

Recommendation - Consider conservation values, purposes, and consider how the landscape may predictably change over time in project acquisition, planning, and design.

Conservation and Preservation

Conservation and preservation prioritize species protection and human impacts to habitats in different ways. According to the National Park

Section 3

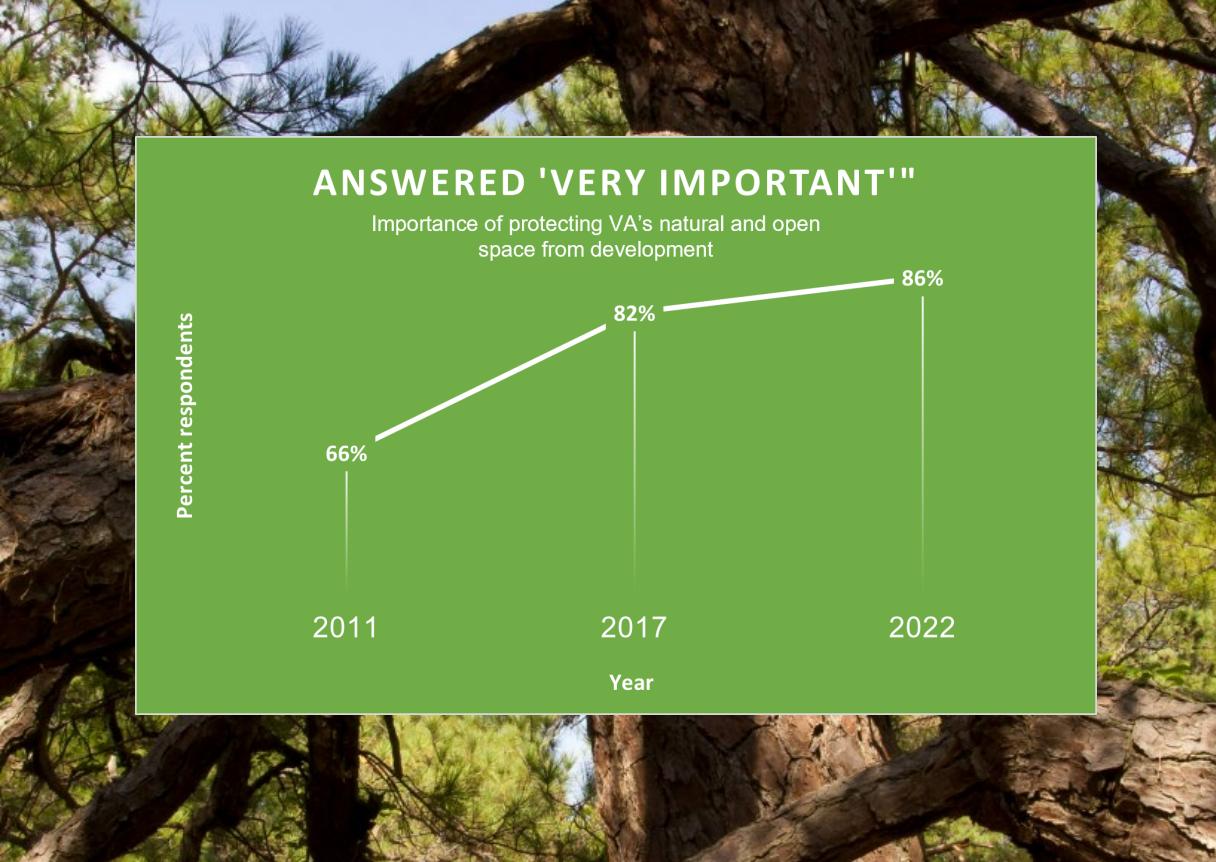
Sections 3.1 & 3.2 – In-text citations that support both private and public land conservation

Section 3.1.3

- “Most respondents (85.7%) believe that it is important to protect Virginia’s natural and open space lands from development.”
- “91% of Virginians believe public funds should be used to acquire land to prevent the loss of natural areas.”

Section 3.2.3

- “Ecosystem services and other appreciable values arise from conserved tracts of land, especially connected and conserved tracts of land.”
- “Water quality improvement efforts and overall watershed integrity significantly influence resource conservation and recreation enjoyment.”



Once natural lands and historic areas are lost, they are lost forever. Preserve, preserve, preserve.

Survey respondent, Virginia Outdoors Survey Report

Section 4 – Grants

Inside the VOP HUB

Gateway for Funding - devoted to assist applicants and promote grant programs

Key Takeaways

- **Recommendations** during all **steps of planning** a recreation or conservation project
- Guidance to **achieve success** and access funding
- Navigating **agency coordination** for NEPA and Section 106 - compliance for Federal funding
- Finding grant, cost-share, and agency **programs** that suit specific planned project



Federal and State Grants - Planning Assistance

Section 4

[Section 4.1 - Federal and State Grants](#)
Looking for a grant program? Learn more about the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other grant programs that support the topics covered in the Virginia Outdoors Plan.

[Visit Page](#)

[Section 4.2 - Grant Planning for Success](#)
An overview of common grant purposes, best practices to improve eligibility, incorporating...
[Visit Page](#)

[Section 4.3 - Navigating Federal and State Requirements](#)
An assistance tool for LWCF applications
[Visit Page](#)

What makes a good grant project?

1. The project plan follows current guidance from the Virginia Outdoors Plan, locality comprehensive plan, and statewide agency plans and initiatives.
2. Recreational facilities and amenities development avoids negative impacts to environmental and cultural resources described in the Virginia Outdoors Plan, and identified through online planning tools.
3. The project plan follows the grant purpose and call for proposal.
4. The project is beyond the concept phase.
5. The project has a realistic scope of work, timeframe, and budget.
6. The project is developed in tandem with strong partnerships that include volunteer groups and non-profit stakeholders, and with community engagement throughout the planning phases.

Best practices for grant eligibility
Consider the information below as what may be most ideal, but not always required.
Competitive grant rounds have key planning milestones and formal approval processes prior to any fund distribution. Eligible projects that meet all the grant program requirements and align to program goals are more likely to succeed, but application rounds typically receive more eligible projects than what the funding can support.
Grant manuals and grant announcements provide details on the program requirements and stipulations, and it is also common for grant managers to hold information webinars ahead of a grant round application deadline.



Gateway to Funding

Total Grant Funds 2018-2023

LWCF, Recreational Trails Fund, Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, Trails Access

\$33,915,746.92

Awarded through the Department of Conservation and Recreation - Planning and Recreation Resources

LWCF Funds Used in Virginia

Between 2018-2023

\$12,573,483.01

Acquisition and development grants for outdoor recreation across the state.

414 LWCF parks and counting!



Survey Results in Dashboards

- Regionalized survey results alongside recreation data for simultaneous **spatial analysis**.
- A **demographic variables** dashboard shows results that stood out between statistically weighted demographic groups – a first for the Virginia Outdoors Plan.
- Surveyed activities are **easier to find, filter, and interpret** in regional dashboards

VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN 2024

[Table of Contents](#) [Survey Results](#) [Mapping Resources](#) [Library](#) [FAQ](#)

Inside the VOP HUB

Step 1 - Select the Region or All Regions from **Select a Region** in the header bar.

Step 2 - Select a **Survey Question** below to view the results in the graph for the corresponding Region(s).

Map - Zoom in to view outdoor recreation data layers and other relevant data (optional).

Survey Question

Search...
Make a Selection
Avoided trail park due to crowding
Changes to Enhance Welcome
Considered a close to home park, minutes by walk
Considered a close to home park, minutes by drive
Considered a close to home park, minutes by bike
Going public park with 10-minute walk from home
Frequency of participation, outdoor recreation
Reset

Virginia Outdoors Survey Response

Region	No (%)	Yes (%)
Region 1	85	15
Region 2	65	35
Region 3	70	20
Region 4	60	40

[Virginia Outdoors Survey Report - 2022](#)

PDF document of the statewide and regionalized survey results

Virginia Outdoors Survey Results Dashboards

[Recreation Values and Preferences](#)

Regional analysis of values and preferences.

[Demographic Variables in Responses](#)

Values and preferences analyzed by demographic variable

[Activity Results Graphs and Charts](#)

Virginia Outdoors Survey results for all 101 recreation activities.

Recreation Activities VOP Category [Reset Data Table](#) [Sports and Free Play](#) [Trails](#) [Water Access](#) [Wildlife and Nature-Oriented](#) [View by Activity \(Optional\)](#) No category selected

VOS Question	Activity	Percent Response (%)	Regional Significance
28	Walking for pleasure	46.40	
28	Hiking/backpacking day trip	27.50	
28	ATV/UTV off-road	23.00	Yes
28	Horseback riding	18.40	
28	Jogging/running	15.00	
28	Paved or gravel bicycle trail	14.90	
28	Driving 4 wheel off road, Jeep, truck	14.30	
27	Bicycle touring on roads	12.10	
28	Mountain biking	9.20	
28	Electric assist bike on trail	6.00	
28	Driving motorcycle off road/dirt bike	5.90	
27	Electric-assist bicycle on road	5.90	

[Data Guide](#) [More Needed](#) [Last 12 Months \(2021-2022\)](#) [Participated in Virginia](#) [Overnight Stay](#)

Region 1 Analysis - Recreation Activities

Region 2 Analysis - Recreation Activities

Region 3 Analysis - Recreation Activities

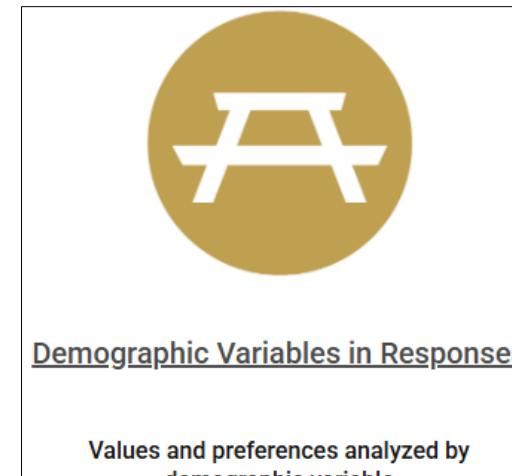
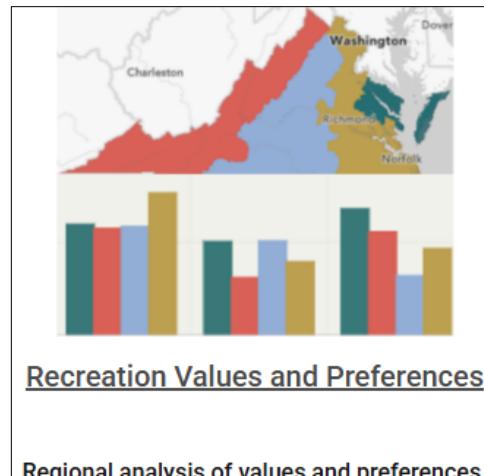
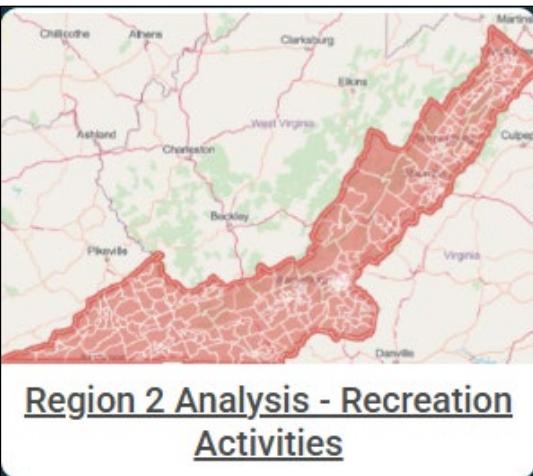
Region 4 Analysis - Recreation Activities

Data-Driven Planning

Planning Scenario

A large tract of land along the river is bequeathed to a locality for conservation and recreation access. Mapping Resources screening shows areas of interest that would support nature-based recreation on site. The region will benefit from a new park, and planners want to reference the VOP to raise funds for recreation trails, water access, and habitat restoration.

1. What recreation activities do residents want more of?
2. What would help improve access, safety, and how should the new park be developed?
3. Will the project serve the interests of the area's unique community?
4. Which VOP text citations support this project idea?



VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN 2024

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Read the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) in the sections below

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
Priorities, Implementation, and the Recreation Economy	Recreation	Land and Water Conservation	Grants and Planning Resources
Go To Section	Go To Section	Go To Section	Go To Section



VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN 2024

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Virginia is rich with an abundance of best-in-class outdoor recreational opportunities. The 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan serves as a five-year roadmap for enhancing outdoor recreation offerings throughout the Commonwealth. This plan demonstrates the Commonwealth's commitment to outdoor recreation, land conservation, and education. In partnership with the great leaders that collaborated on this resource, we are making Virginia the best state to live, work, and recreate.

Throughout the process, we engaged Virginians for their input and insight to enhance Virginia's outdoor experience. I invite all Virginians to utilize the Virginia Outdoors Plan and join our efforts to protect, preserve, and enjoy the Commonwealth's natural resources.

Governor Glenn Youngkin

What is the Virginia Outdoors Plan?

The Virginia Outdoors Plan guides the Commonwealth's communities in connecting people with their most desired outdoor recreation opportunities and protection of natural and scenic resources that add value to our daily lives. The plan identifies Virginia's strategies, priorities, and planned actions so that the state remains eligible for apportionment funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). With continual funding and fulfillment of LWCF obligations, Virginia will increasingly be recognized as best-in-class for outdoor recreation, and natural and cultural resources stewardship.

The Path Forward

VOP implementation years, 2025-2030

- **Connect** with our regional partners and community stakeholders
- **Facilitate full use of the VOP platform** with training webinars, hybrid workshops, and statewide conference presentations
- Provide informative **support to potential grant applicants**



The VOP is Live!

National Park Service approved
the plan Dec. 17, 2024



VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN 2024



<https://vop-vdcr.hub.arcgis.com>



<https://vop-vdcr.hub.arcgis.com/>

DCR Grants Contact

2025 Grant Rounds

Recreational Trails Program
(RTP) - maintenance &
improvements on existing trails

Kellie Seaton
recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov
804-786-1119

March 11 - May 6

Land and Water Conservation
Fund (LWCF)
State & Local Formula
Acquisition and/or Development

Kristal McKelvey
kristal.mckelvey@dcr.virginia.gov
804-508-8896

June 2 - August 28
(LWCF)

Virginia Land Conservation
Foundation (VLCF)
Easements or Acquisitions –
multiple categories

Suzan Bulbulkaya
suzan.bulbulkaya@dcr.virginia.gov
804-971-0257

TBD at June board
meeting



Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

Additional Information: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/grants>

Thank You

Matthew Wells – Director, Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)

Frank Stovall – Deputy Director of Operations (DCR)

Kelly McClary – Division Director, Planning & Recreation Resources (PRR)

VOP Project Managers

Kristal McKelvey – Chief Recreation Grants Manager

Allison Tillett – Environmental Program Planner



Break







STATE TRAILS OFFICE UPDATES



State Trails Advisory Committee Meeting
April 28, 2025

State Trails Office Updates

- Staff

- Jakob Helmboldt
- State Trails Administrator
- Transportation and Mobility Planning Division
- Ross Tepe
- State Trails Administrator
- Local Assistance Division
- Cassi Patterson
- State Trails Program Coordinator
- Local Assistance Division



*The Virginia Creeper Trail,
Southwest Virginia*

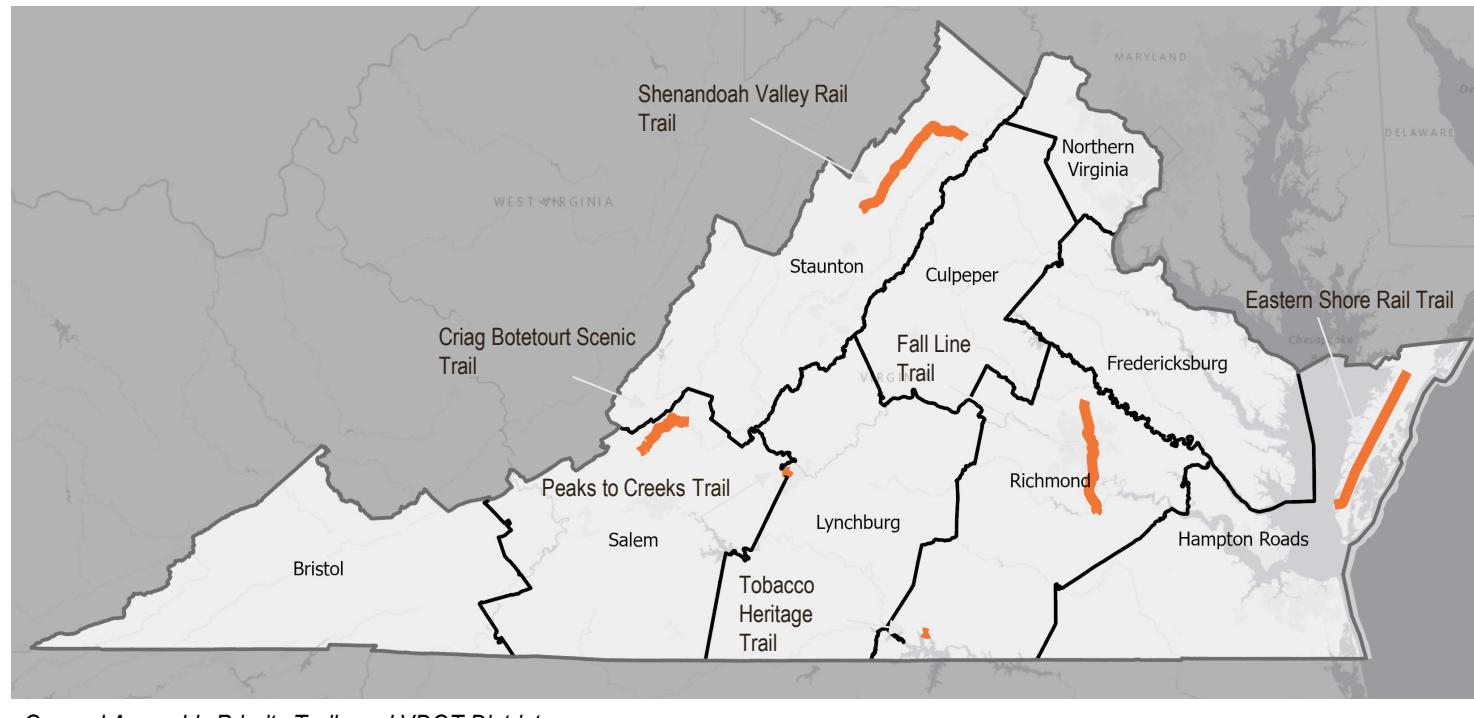
What is the State Trails Office?

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



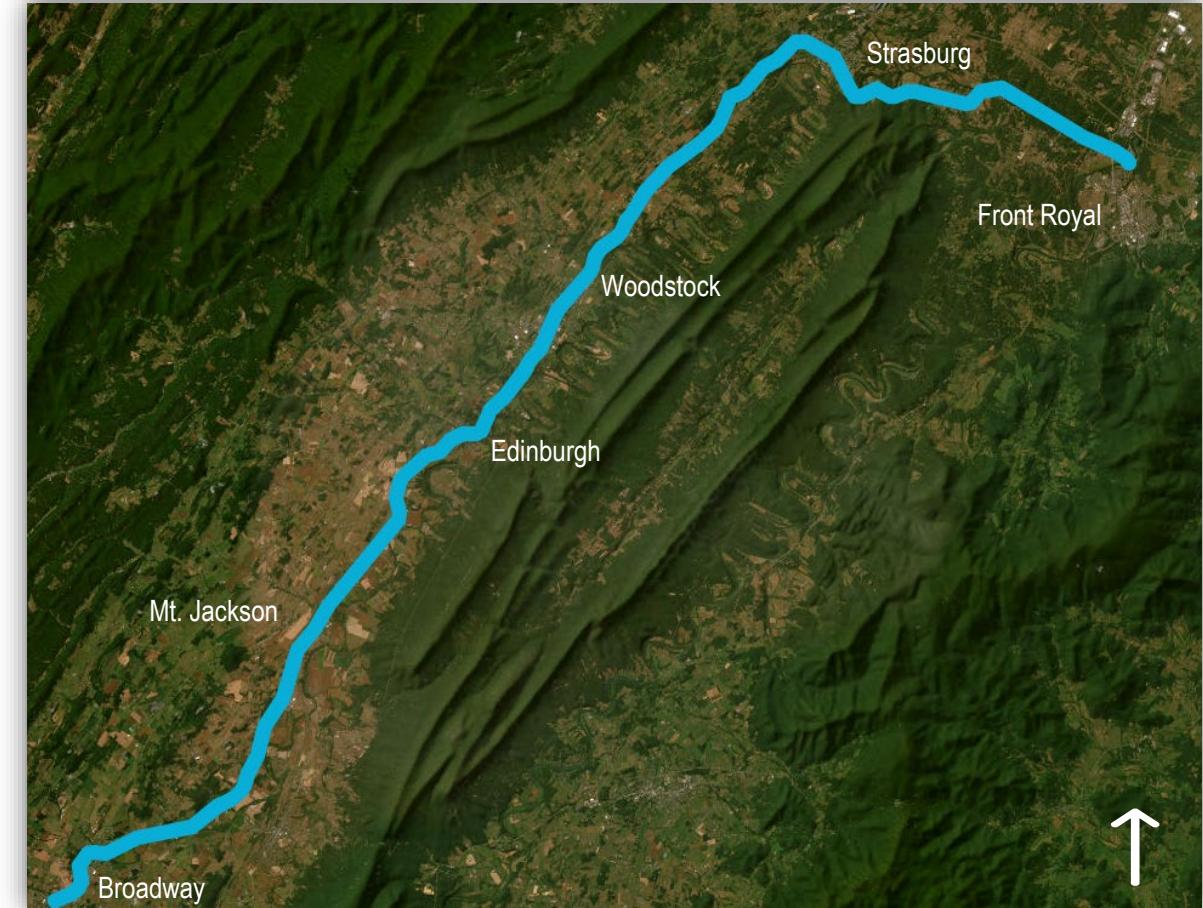
General Assembly Priority Trails

- Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail
- Eastern Shore Rail Trail
- Tobacco Heritage Trail
- Peaks to Creeks Trail
- Craig Botetourt Scenic Trail
- Fall Line Trail (2024 General Assembly Session)



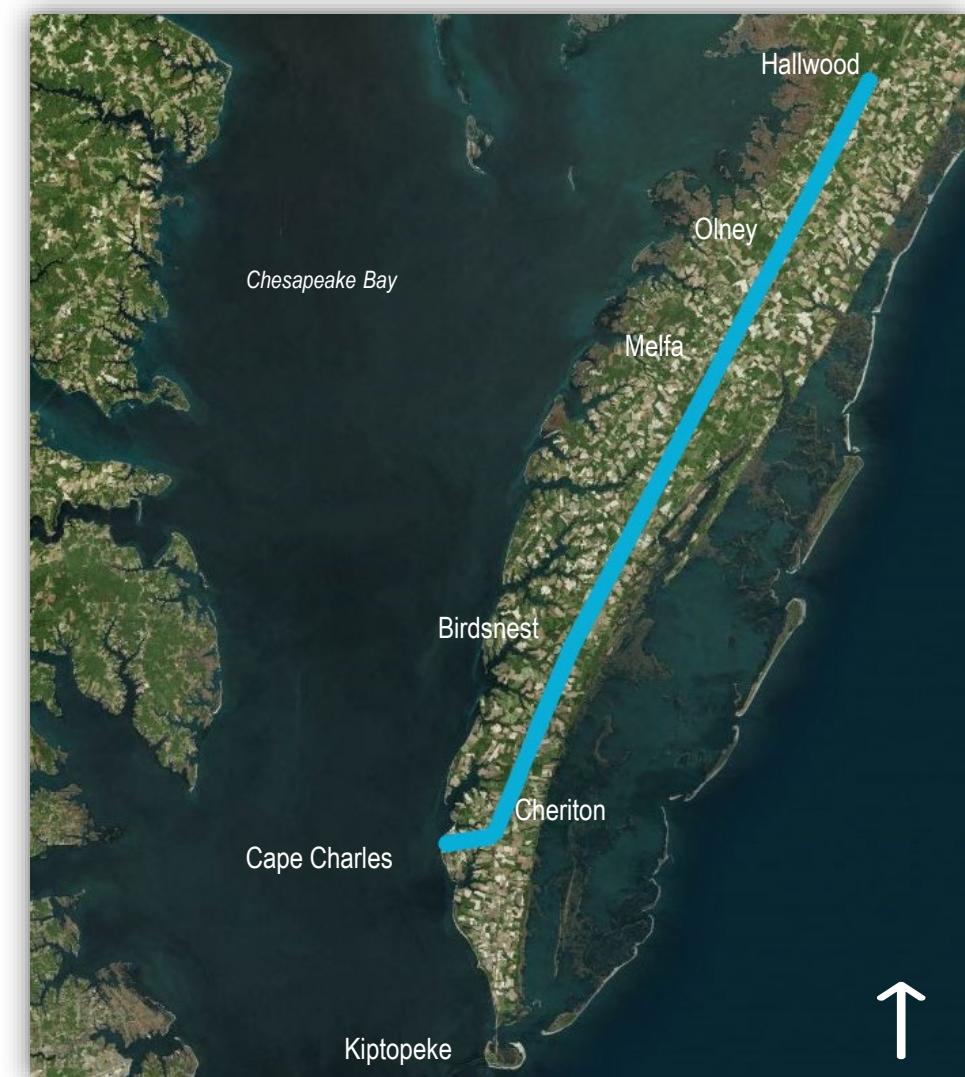
Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail

- VDOT District: Staunton
- Localities: Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren Counties
- Length: 48.5 miles
- GA Allocation: \$35M
- Rail with Trail Assessment status:
 - Phase 1: Alternatives Analysis
 - Phase 2: Corridor Assessment (current)
 - Phase 3: Assessment Findings



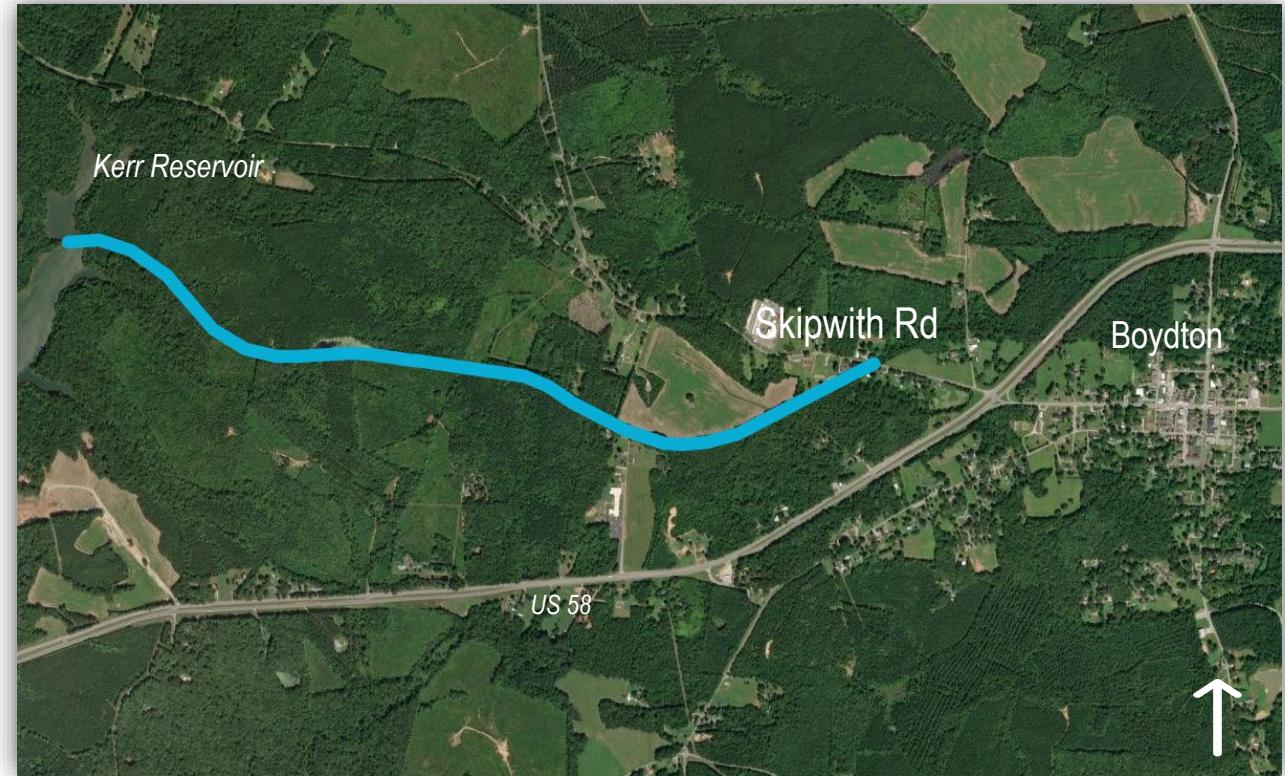
Eastern Shore Rail Trail

- VDOT District: Hampton Roads
- Localities: Accomack County, Northampton County; includes 12 incorporated towns
- Length: 49.1 miles
- GA Allocation: \$3.75M
- Status:
 - Cape Charles to Cheriton (3.53 miles) (Construction)
 - Other funding
 - Potential SMART SCALE Round 6 funding (~11.1 miles) (Cheriton to Birdsnest)
 - Federal RAISE Grant: (Birdsnest to Melfa) (~12.5 miles)
 - SMART SCALE Round 5: Melfa to Olney (4.21 miles)



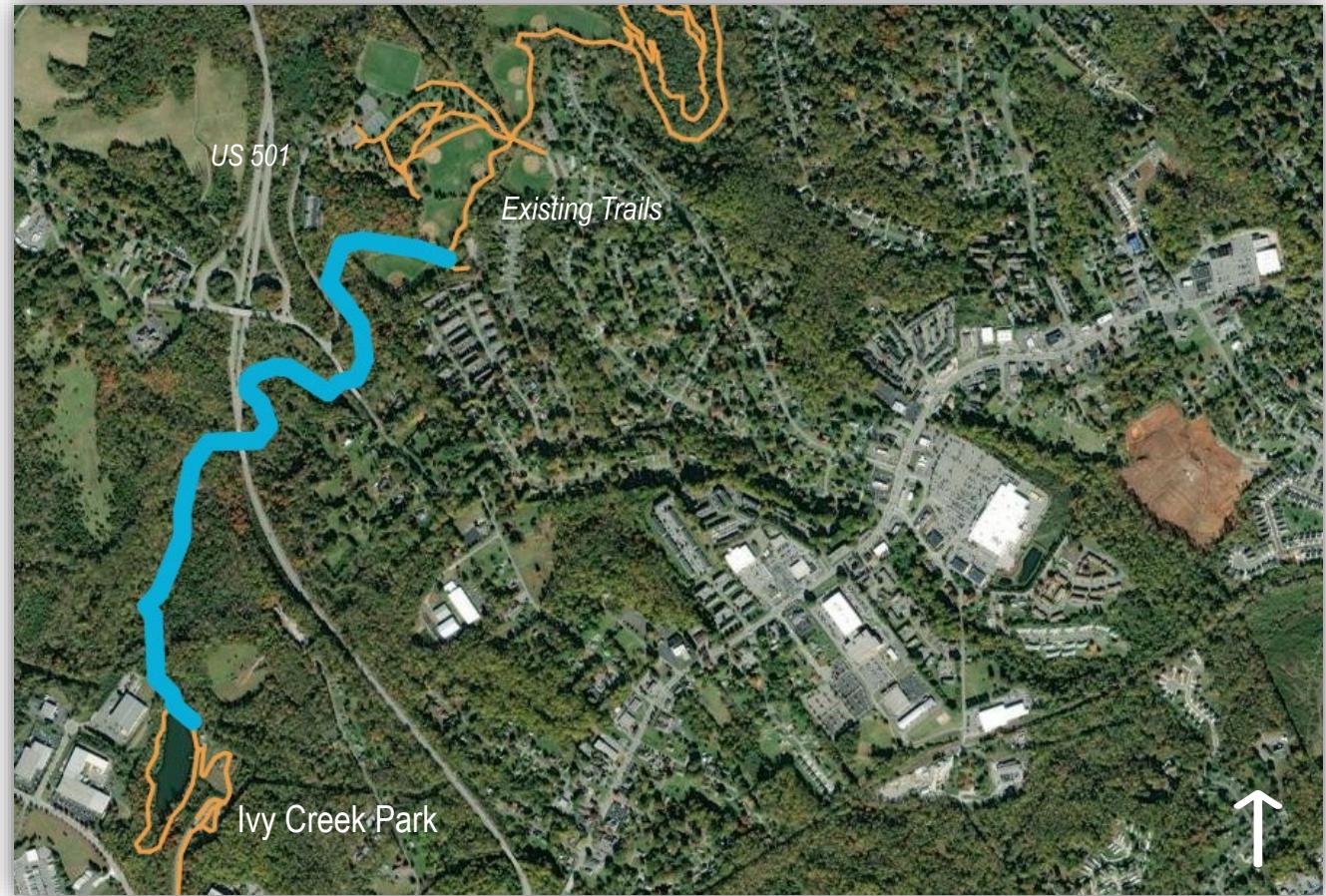
Tobacco Heritage Trail

- **VDOT District: Richmond**
- **Localities: Mecklenburg County**
- **Length: 2.0 miles**
- **GA Allocation: \$4M**
- **Status:**
 - Preliminary engineering started, public involvement upcoming, potential advertisement Winter 2026



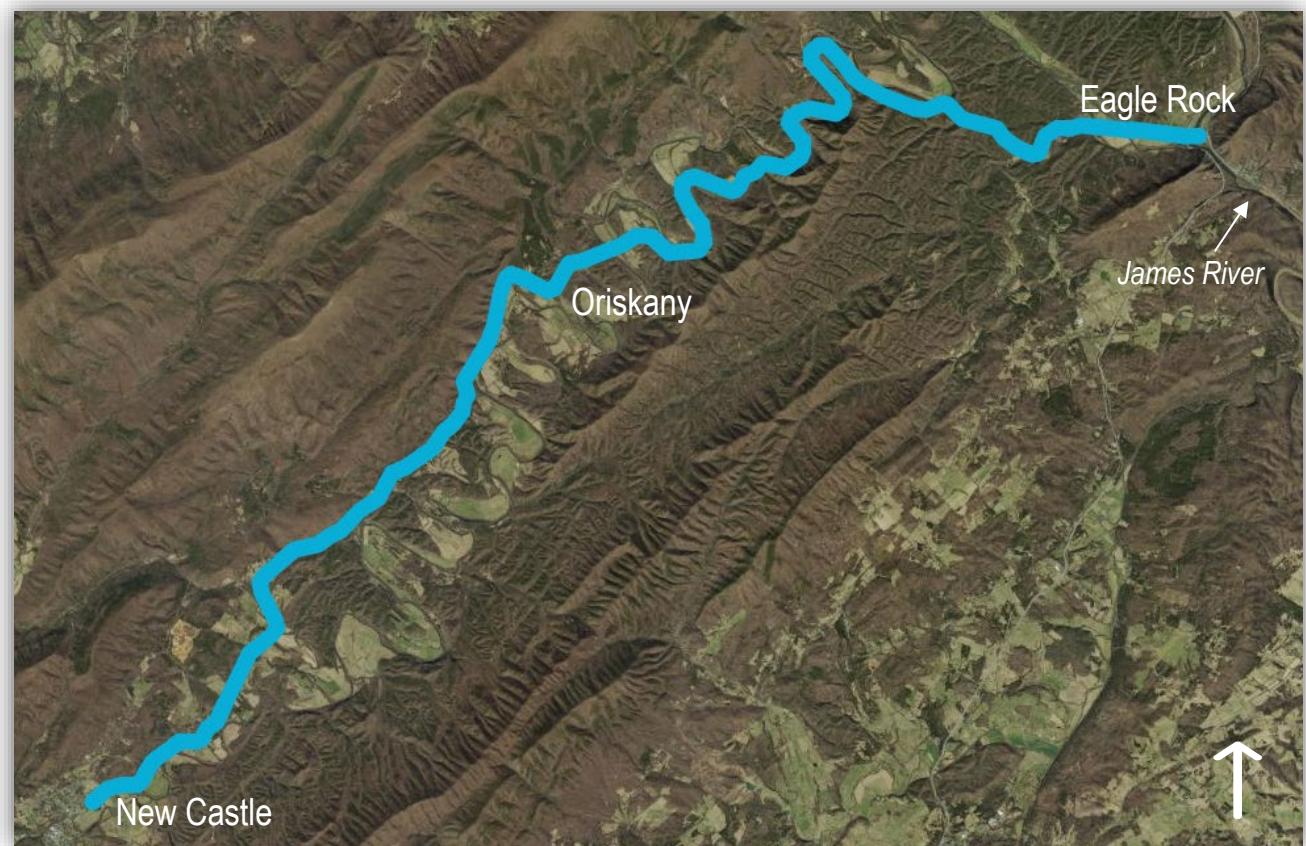
Peaks to Creeks Trail

- VDOT District: Lynchburg
- Localities: City of Lynchburg
- Length: 2.2 miles
- GA Allocation: \$15M
- Status:
 - Survey underway along corridor, design to begin this spring



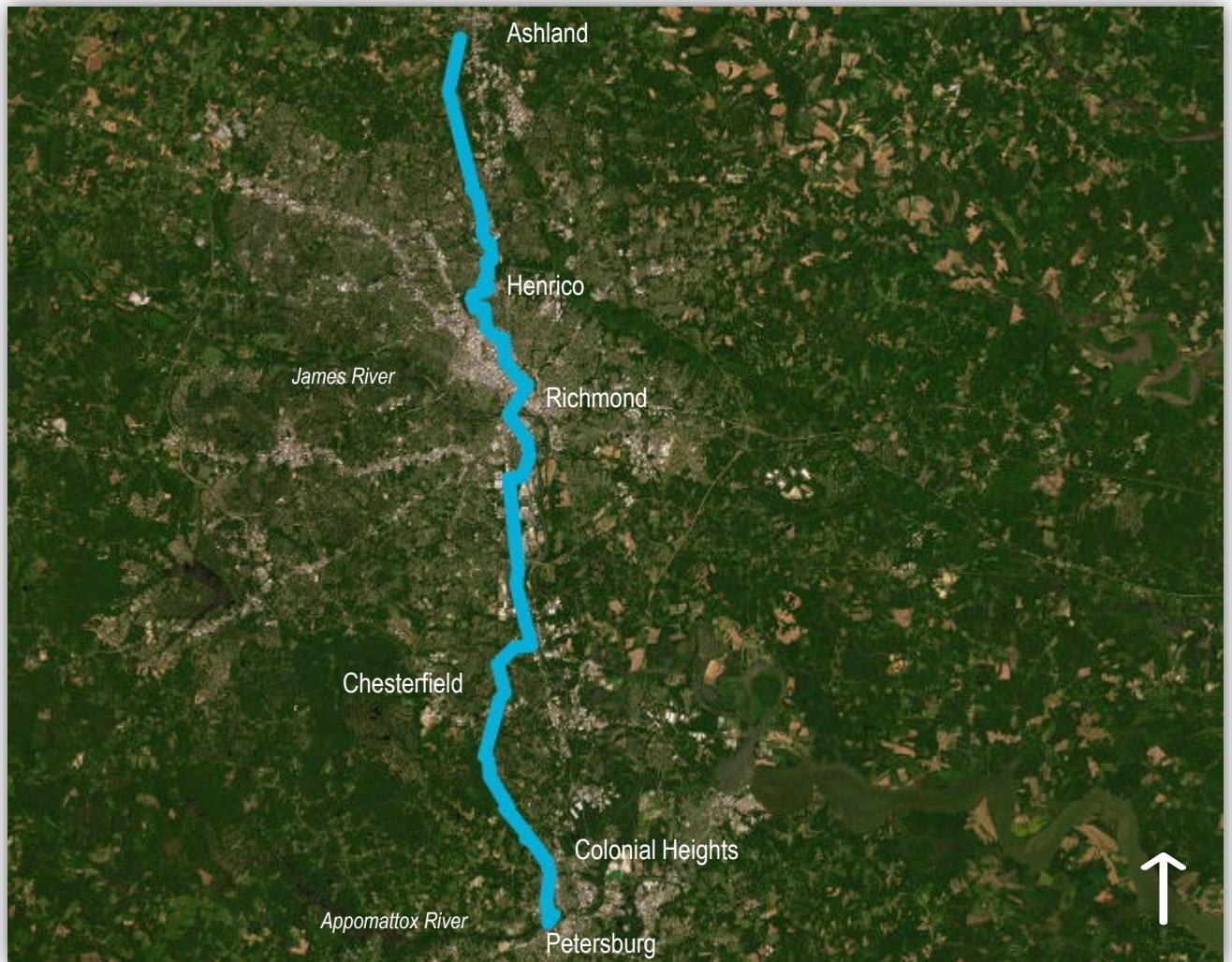
Craig Botetourt Trail

- **VDOT District: Salem**
- **Localities: Botetourt and Craig Counties**
- **Length: 26 miles (9 miles on secondary roads)**
- **GA Allocation: \$19.5M**
- **Surface Type: Aggregate and some low-volume secondary roads**
- **Status:**
 - Design work underway, public meetings scheduled for Summer 2025



Fall Line Trail

- VDOT District: Richmond
- Localities: Ashland Town; Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico Counties; Colonial Heights, Petersburg and Richmond Cities
- Length: 43 miles
- Surface Type: Paved
- Status:
 - Some phases under construction, others in planning/early design phase
- GA Allocation: \$7.5M
 - Kanawha Plaza (Richmond) segment
 - Chesterfield Route 1 segment



Virginia Trail Type and Surface Selection Guide

- Objectives:
 - Trail Users Overview
 - Typical Trail Corridors
 - Trail Typologies
 - Trail Design Guidance
 - Integration to VDOT's Road Design Manual
- Decision matrix for trail development based on context, design, and federal/state funding eligibility criteria
- Overview of additional considerations
 - Cost, resiliency, maintenance needs, and accessibility
- Expected Fall 2025



Key Features

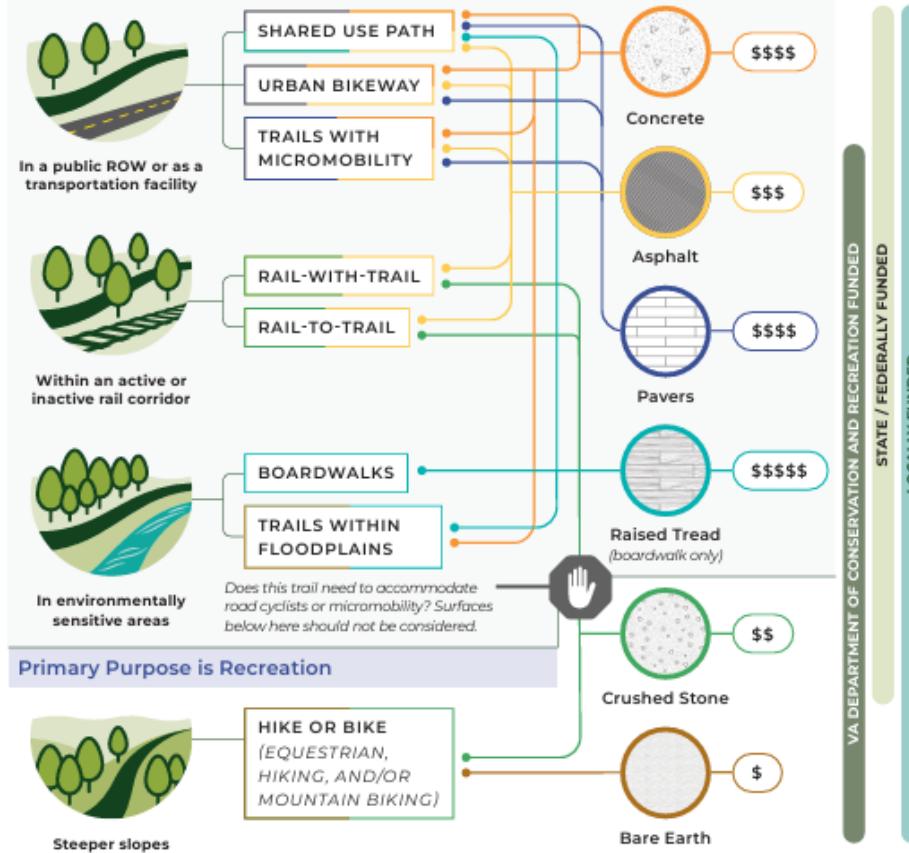
The Virginia Trail Type and Surface Selection Guide will include:

	Examples of content to be shown in the guide
 Trail Types Explore trail type options for both transportation and recreation, from paved to natural surface trails.	Use the guide to help choose the right trail surface and learn more about considerations for certain trails including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared use paths• Trails in challenging environments, including utility corridors, floodplains, and wetlands• Natural surface trails (hiking, biking, and/or equestrian)
 Trail Surface & Standards Review detailed standards and best practices for each trail type and surface.	
 Case Studies & Best Practices Learn from exemplary Virginia trails, including rail-trails, natural surface trails, and paved paths.	From rails-to-trails, paved urban trails, to natural surface trails, Virginia is rich with examples of best practices that can inform surface selection.
 Geographical Contexts Understand how geographical differences influence the selection of appropriate trail surfaces.	One size does not fit all. This guide will help communities apply what trail surface types are most context sensitive to their communities.
 Accessibility Standards Review when full accessibility is required and how it relates to trail surface selection.	Easy to understand guidance will outline when hardened surfaces are required on trails, how to achieve universal access, and best practices for surface selection for those using a wheelchair.
 Trail User Profiles Discover how trail user needs (like pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, etc.) can inform surface selection.	Learn about different trail user needs in order to ensure design accommodates your users with the appropriate surface selection.

Selecting the Right Surface for Your Trail Project

The following is conceptual in nature and will be refined to specific Virginia context in the guide

Primary Purpose is Transportation



* Accessibility of crushed stone may vary due to site conditions.

Statewide Multi-Use Trails Plan Phase I Recap

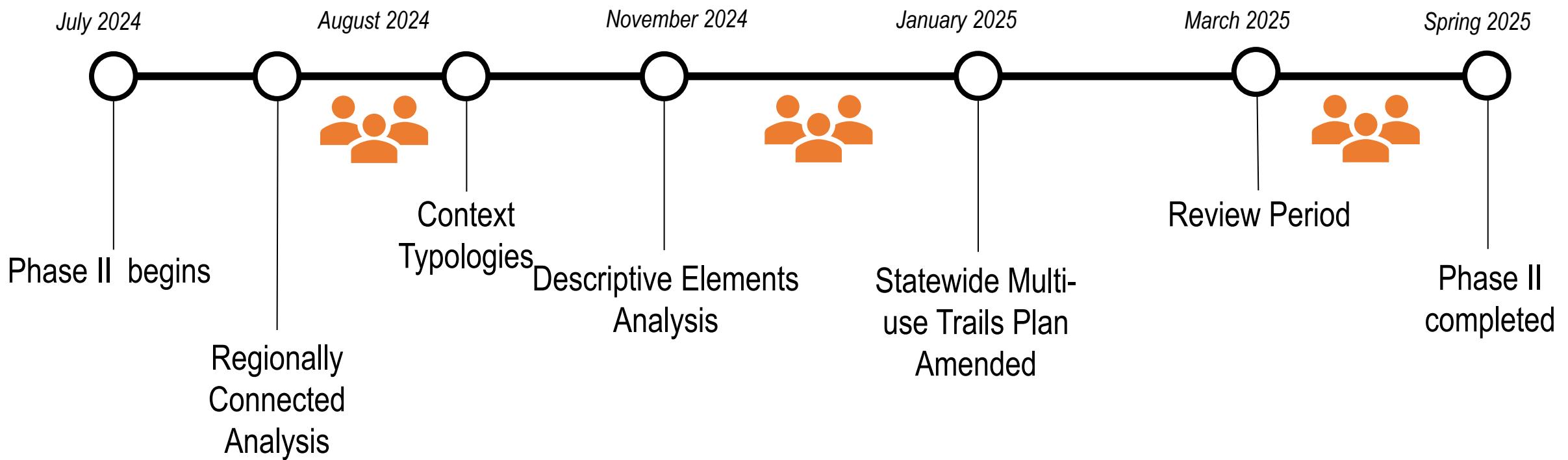
- **Analyses Completed**
 - Population
 - Employment
 - Underserved communities
 - Safety priority corridors
- **Themes**
 - Connected
 - Accessible
 - Contrasting Geography
 - Safe



Statewide Multi-Use Trails Plan Phase II Scope

- State Trails Office Advisory Committee Meetings
- Spatial Analysis
 - Regionally connected
 - Population density typologies
 - Descriptive elements
 - Tiering of network
- Aggregated funding opportunities
- ArcGIS Online StoryMap
- Updated Statewide Multi-Use Trails Plan

Statewide Multi-Use Trails Plan Phase II Schedule



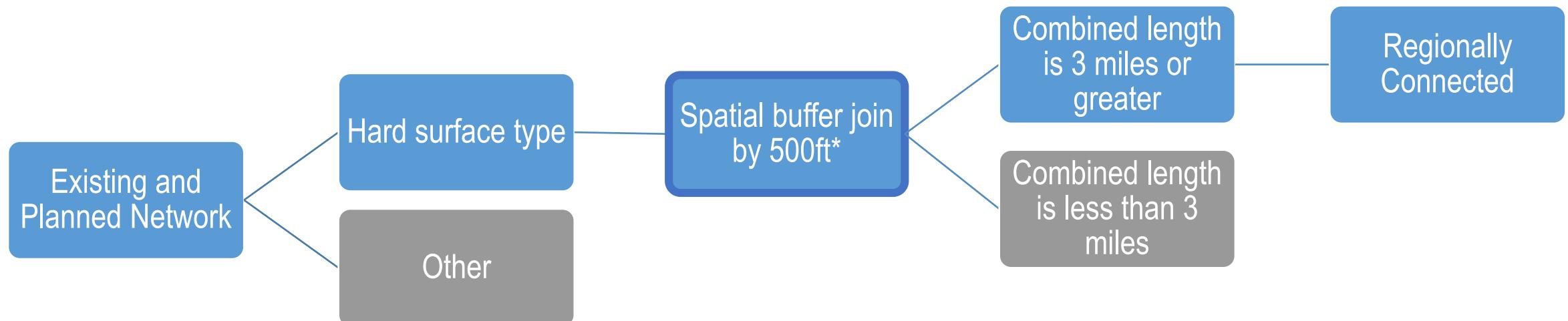
Spatial Analysis - Regionally Connected Definition

Regionally Connected:

- Existing + Hard Surface \geq 3 Miles
- Existing Connected Trails + Hard Surfaced \geq 3 Miles

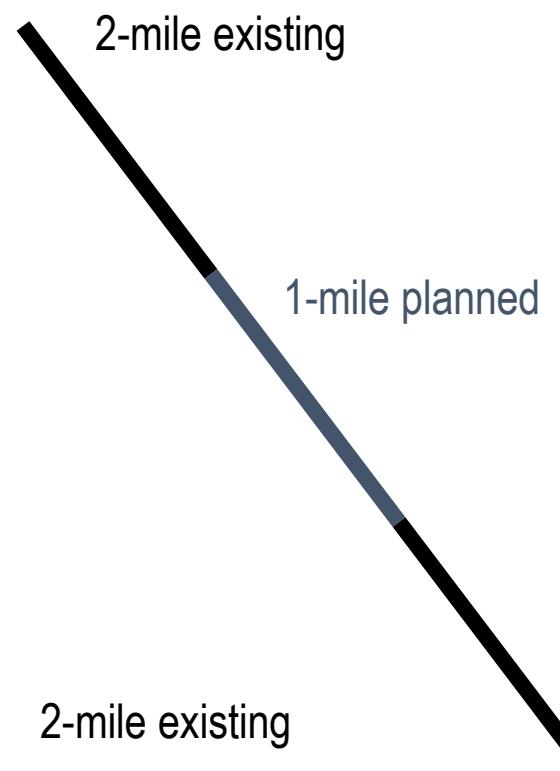
OR

- Planned + Existing (Combined Length) \geq 3 Miles + Hard Surfaced



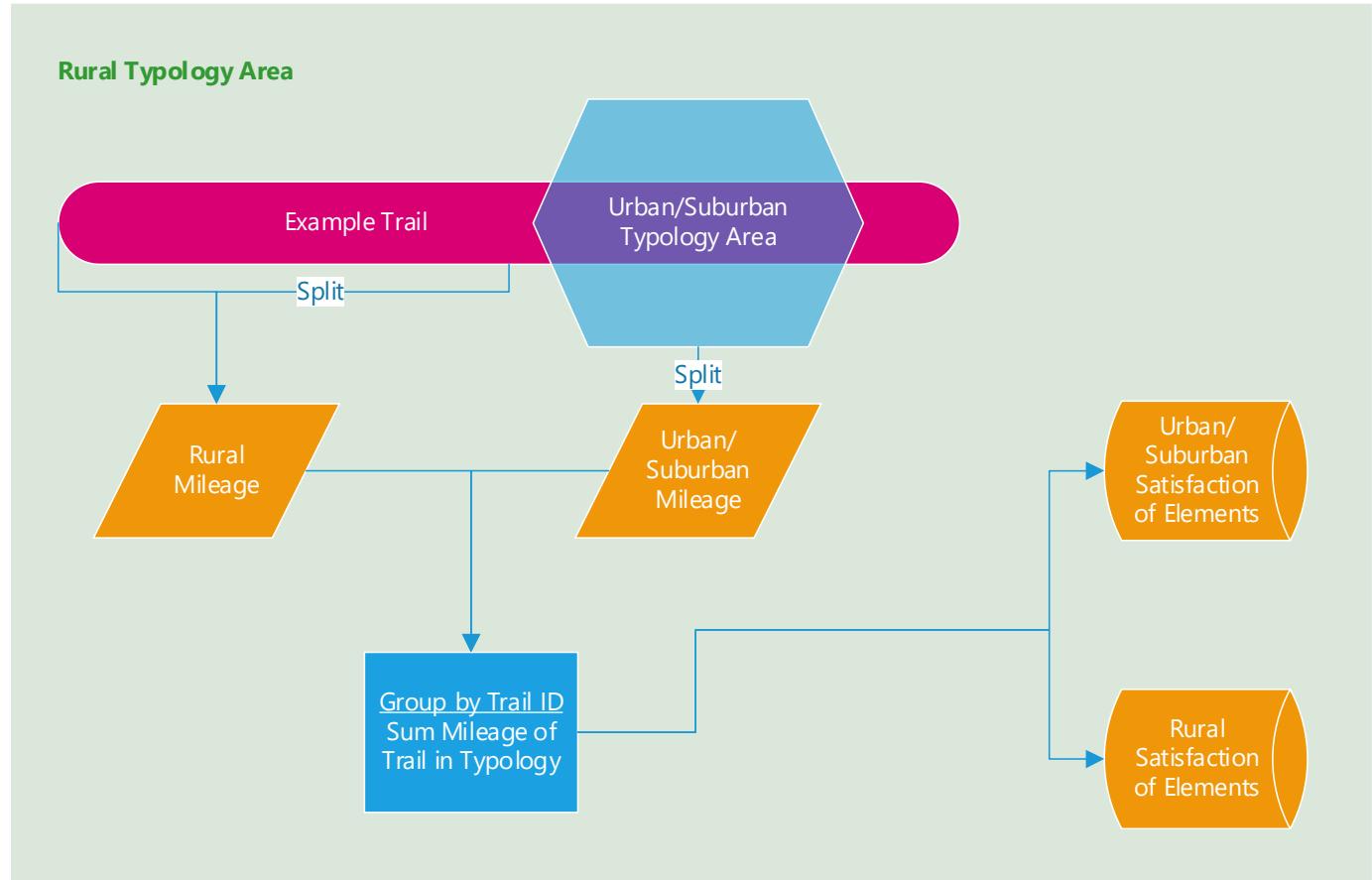
Regionally Connected - Join by Distance

- Spatial analysis was conducted to identify planned trails that extend or fill the gaps in the existing trail network (0.1 miles distance)
 - Length of these combined segments were calculated
 - 3-mile threshold applied for trail segment to be regionally connected
- Example: A 1-mile trail that bridges a gap between two 2-mile trails could be considered 5 miles in total length



Population Density Typologies

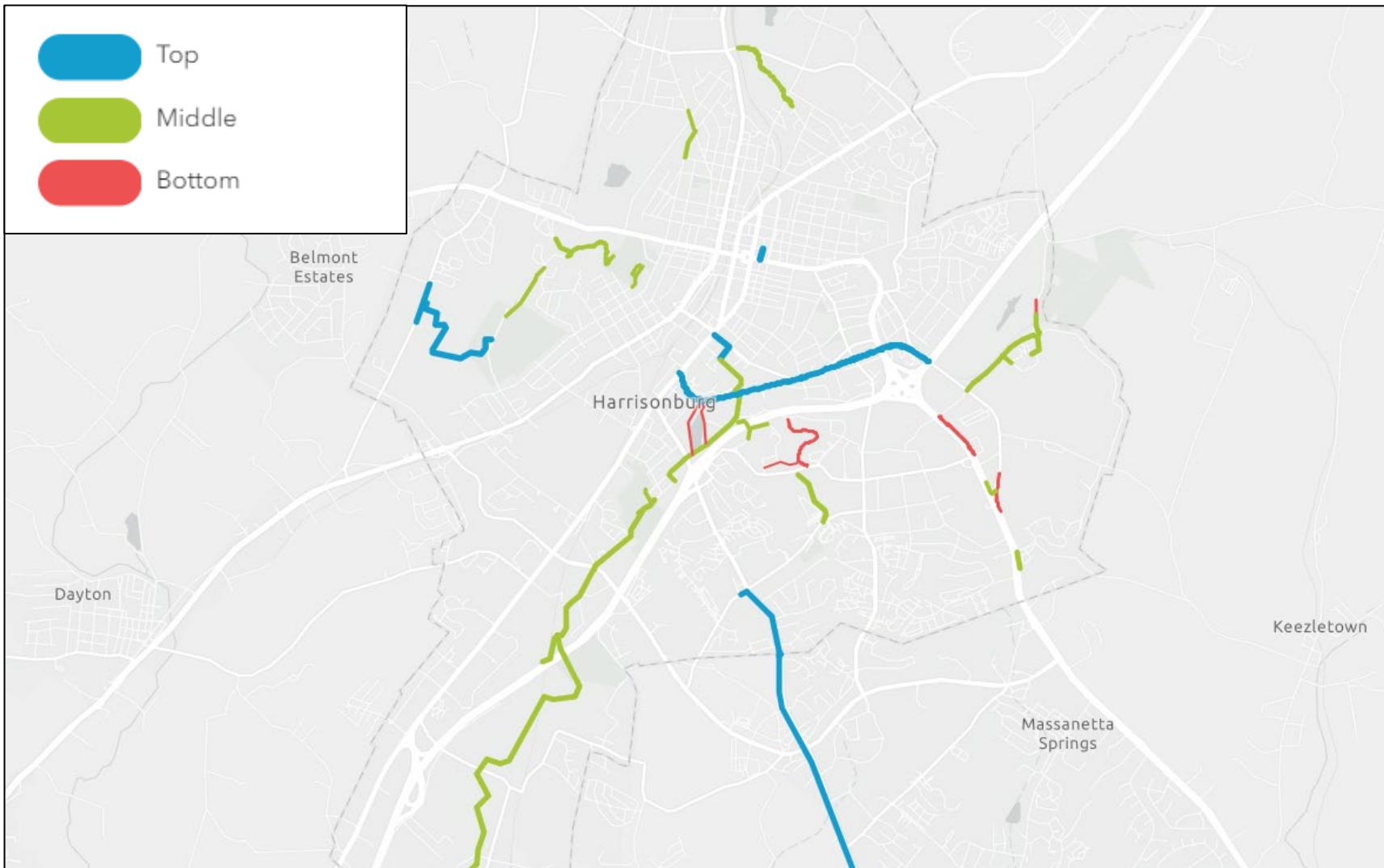
- Understand the areas where trails are located
 - Trails within each typology will be tiered to understand how they satisfy the descriptive elements
 - Our approach for determining where trails fell



Descriptive Elements Analysis

Element	Data Source	Question Being Answered
Key destinations	Virginia Landmarks Dataset (VGIN)	How can these facilities provide access to key destinations (schools, libraries, emergency services, hospitals, Commonwealth facilities) ?
Transit stops	Open-source transit data (GTFS)	
Dedicated bicycle facilities	VDOT Bicycle Facilities Inventory	How can these facilities connect to other travel modes and facilities for non-motorized users?
Pedestrian facilities	Open-source data	
State and local parks	ESRI, DCR, ParkScore	How does this network provide access to recreation facilities?
Safety and Health Opportunity Index	PBSAP 4.0 and HOI	How can these facilities help improve safety and health initiatives?

Descriptive Elements Analysis



Trail Statistics

	Regionally Connected Trails	All Trails
Total Miles Evaluated	3,250 Miles	4,239 Miles
Total Segments Evaluated	2,630 Segments	4,745 Segments
Miles Connected by Trail Segments*	1,070 Miles	2,874 Miles

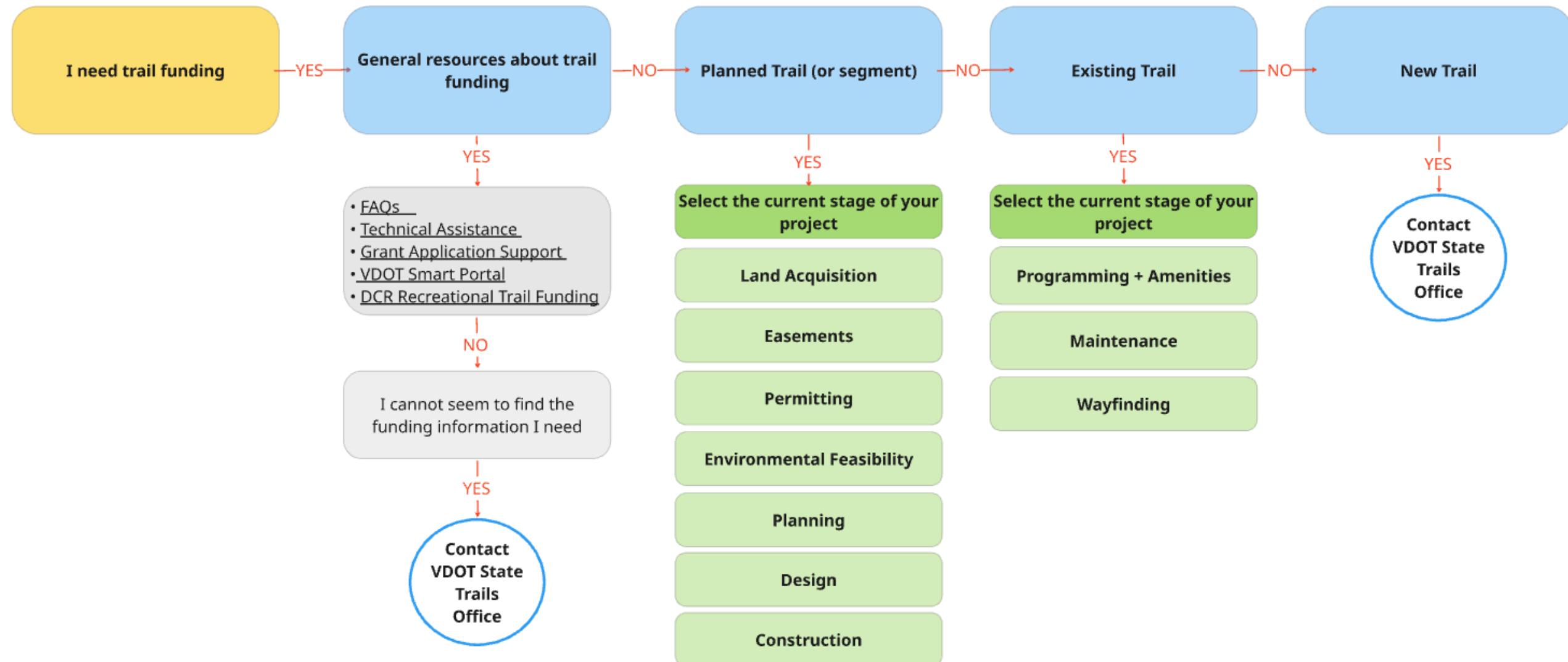
*Miles connected by Trail Segments filtered for only planned trails

Using the Results

How can the results of the analysis be used?

- Support localities in implementation and prioritization
- Aid jurisdictions in identifying funding opportunities
- Enhance understanding of regional connectivity
- Promote coordination for future projects

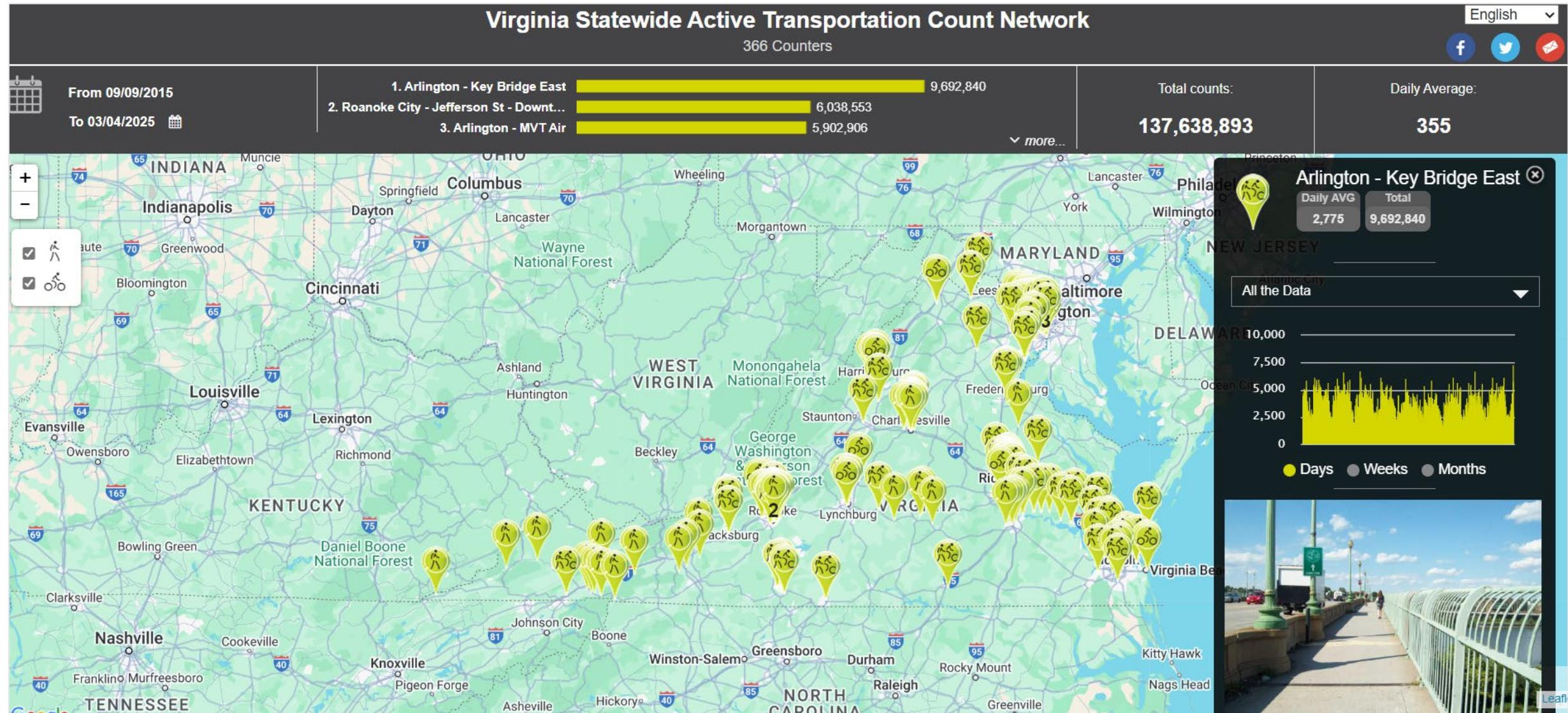
Funding Matrix



VDOT Active Transportation Count Program

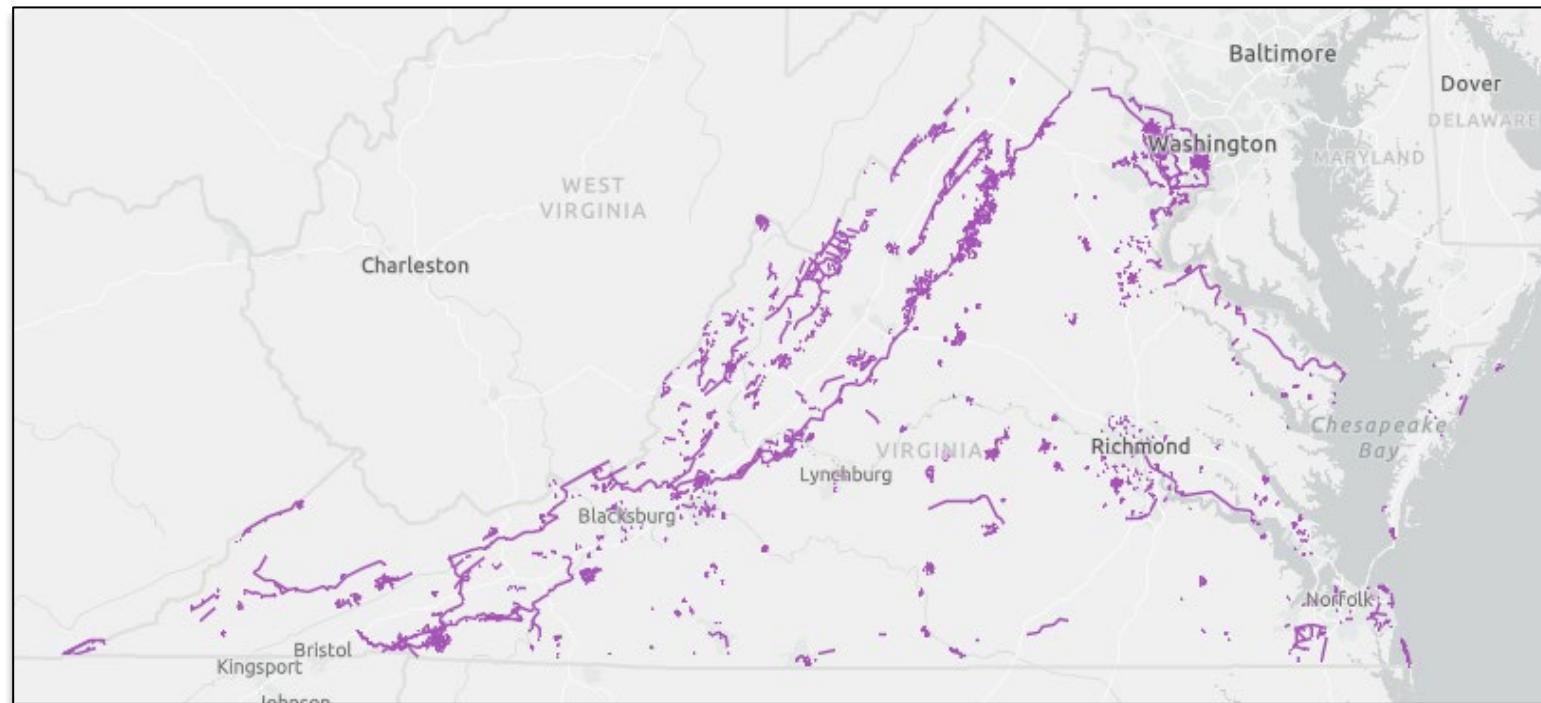
- Initiated in 2018 and managed by VDOT's Transportation and Mobility Planning Division
- Network of 80 permanent VDOT and local partner counters (28 VDOT, remainder local)
- These count pedestrians, bicyclists, and micromobility users on shared use paths, on-street bike facilities, sidewalks, and trails across Virginia
- 55 temporary Pyro counters deployed for one-month year-over-year counts for a total of 350 sites

VDOT Active Transportation Count Program Interactive Map



State Trails Office Resource Hub

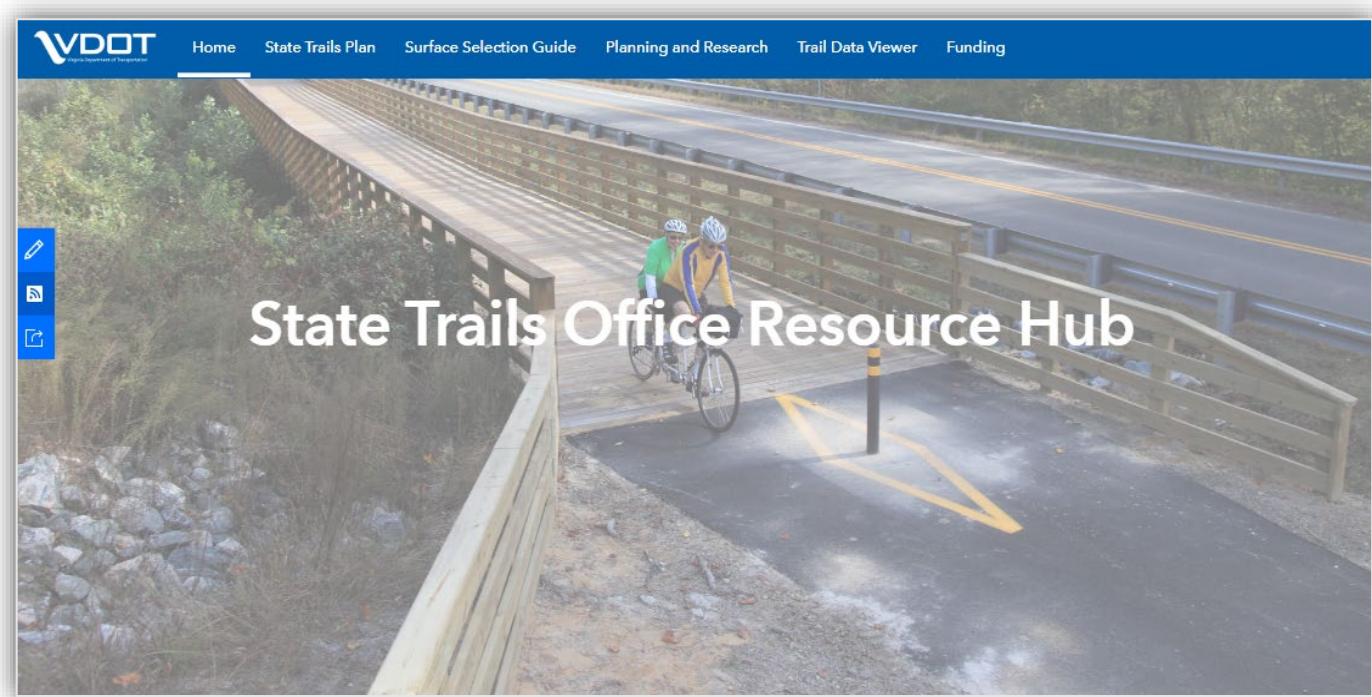
- Trail data
 - VDOT Shared Use Path data
 - DCR All Trail data
- Missing metadata challenge
- Online resource



Trails Data Inventory

Resource Hub Concept

- Ongoing work:
 - Collaborate with DCR for shared data
 - Draft website design
 - Compile existing resources and data
 - Develop trail data dictionary visual matrix
 - Incorporate feedback survey
- Summer 2025 initial launch



Contact Us:

- Website: vdot.virginia.gov/trails
-
- Contact the State Trails Office: statetrailsoffice@vdot.virginia.gov



Break



Member Reports



Fall Meeting

- Virtual – Fall 2025 (Date TBD)



Meet and Greet Presenters



Thank You!

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

Presentation posted on website

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

