

Southwest Virginia Museum 10-Year Master Plan Public Information Meeting

April 4, 2023





Agenda

- **Opening Remarks:**
 - Kelly McClary, Planning and Recreation Resources Director
 - Dr. Melissa Baker, Virginia State Parks Director
- **Introduction to the Virginia State Park System, Welcome, Park Purpose and Background:**
Gretchen Cope, Park Manager
- **Meeting Purpose, Goals and Master Planning Process:**
Samantha Wangsgard, Chief Planner
- **Master Plan Goals:** David Bryan, State Parks Planner
- **Park Physical, Natural and Cultural Resource Inventories:**
David Bryan, Burke Greear, Historic Preservation Specialist
- **Public Input Opportunities:** Samantha Wangsgard
- **Wrap Up:** Samantha Wangsgard

Housekeeping

- Please mute your phones and computer microphones
- Please hold questions until the end of the presentation
- Additional comments will be received until **May 4, 2023** via email to:
Samantha Wangsgard at samantha.wangsgard@dcr.virginia.gov.
- Meeting materials will be made available at:
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/sw-masterplan>

Opening Remarks

VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

DISTRICTS

District 1 - Tidewater

- BI** - Belle Isle State Park
- CP** - Chippokes State Park
- FC** - False Cape State Park
- FL** - First Landing State Park
- KP** - Kiptopeke State Park
- MA** - Machicomoco State Park
- MP*** - Middle Peninsula State Park
- YR** - York River State Park

District 2 - Potomac

- CA** - Caledon State Park
- LA** - Lake Anna State Park
- LE** - Leesylvania State Park
- MN** - Mason Neck State Park
- SN** - Sweet Run State Park
- WE** - Westmoreland State Park
- WW** - Widewater State Park

* under development

District 3 - Shenandoah

- DO** - Douthat State Park
- JR** - James River State Park
- NB** - Natural Bridge State Park
- SE** - Seven Bends State Park
- SH** - Shenandoah River State Park
- SK** - Sky Meadows State Park

District 4 - Central

- BC** - Bear Creek Lake State Park
- HB** - High Bridge Trail State Park
- HL** - Holliday Lake State Park
- PO** - Pocahontas State Park
- PW** - Powhatan State Park
- SB** - Staunton River Battlefield Historical State Park
- SC** - Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park
- TL** - Twin Lakes State Park

District 5 - Piedmont

- CL** - Claytor Lake State Park
- FS** - Fairy Stone State Park
- MR*** - Mayo River State Park
- OC** - Occoneechee State Park
- SM** - Smith Mountain Lake State Park
- SR** - Staunton River State Park

District 6 - Southwest

- BK** - Breaks Interstate Park
- CR** - Clinch River State Park
- GH** - Grayson Highlands State Park
- HM** - Hungry Mother State Park
- NR** - New River Trail State Park
- NT** - Natural Tunnel State Park
- ST** - Shot Tower Historical State Park
- SW** - Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park
- WR** - Wilderness Road State Park



Welcome to Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park



- Joined the Virginia State Park System in 1948
- Museum is a National Historic Landmark
- Features a vast array of cultural resources
- Offers a wide variety of programs and events
 - "Gathering in the Gap" Music Festival
 - Lunch on the Lawn Music Series
 - Acoustic Coffee House
 - Various Children's Programs and Camps
 - WiseJAMS
 - Hoots 'N' Haints
 - Festival of Trees
- Active volunteer and community engagement programs

Park Purpose

- SWVA Museum's purpose:
 - *"to collect, preserve, and interpret the history of Southwest Virginia in perpetuity through educational exhibits and programs"*





Park Background

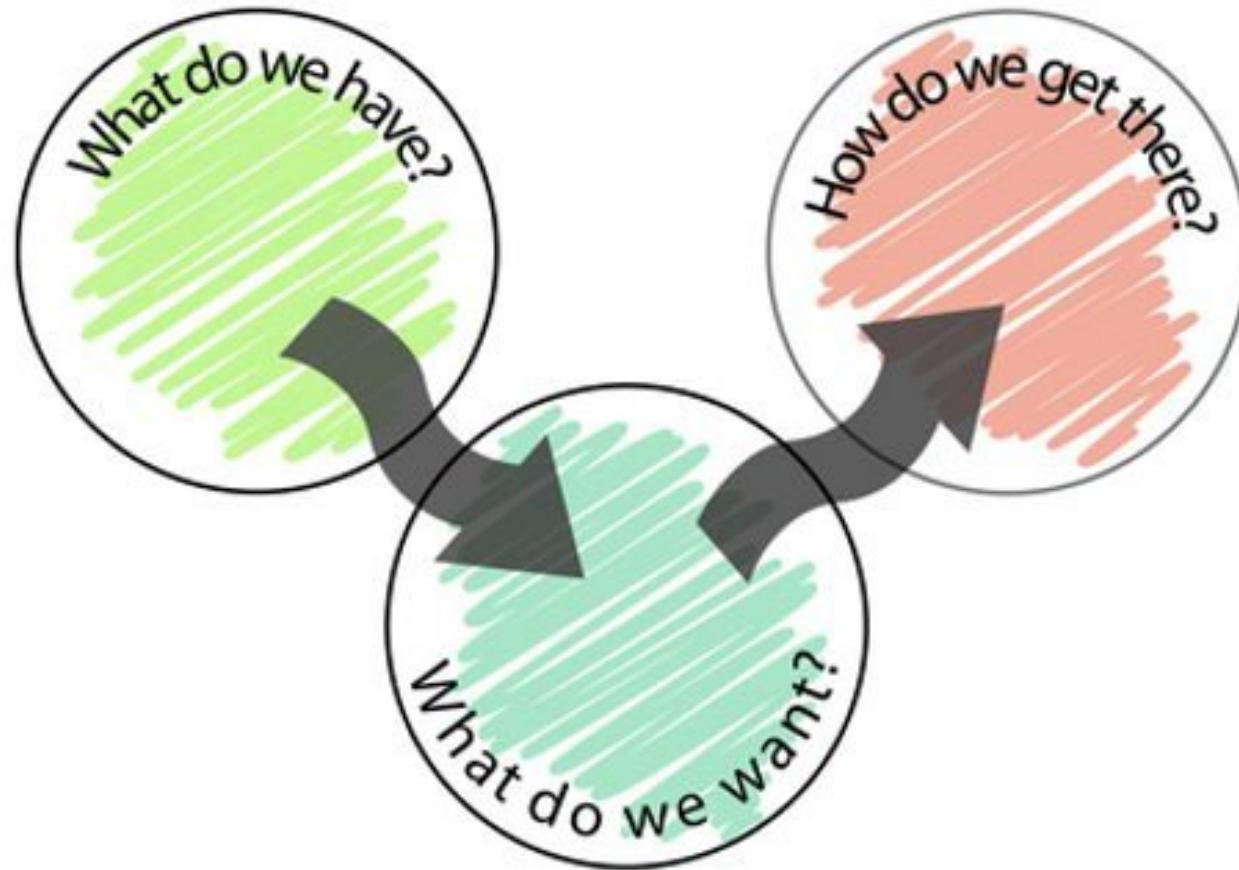
- Park includes the Museum, Carriage House, Poplar Hill Cottage, multiple support buildings, & some adjacent parcels
 - In-progress acquisition of parcel with Interstate 101 Railcar
- Museum houses artifacts conveying the history/culture of Southwest VA & various global artifacts
- Diverse range of educational programming and festivals

Meeting Purpose and Goals

- Introduce attendees to the park and Master Planning process
- Review park resources
- Provide public with opportunity to provide input with regard to the future of the park



Master Planning Vision



(Source: Fairfax County Park Authority, 2022)

Master Planning Process





Master Plan Goals

- Emphasize and build upon unique cultural resources and community programs.
- Establish ambitious, achievable Phased Development Plan:
 - Guided and informed by Resources
 - Consistent with Visitor Experience themes and objectives
 - Incorporates Public Input

Resources Lead the Way

The Virginia State Parks mission is to conserve the **natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources** of the Commonwealth of Virginia and to provide recreational and educational opportunities consistent with good stewardship of these lands, water and facilities that leaves them unimpaired for future generations.



Physical Resources



- The Southwest Virginia Museum
 - Also known as the Ayers House
 - Constructed 1888-1895
 - 11,756 sq. Ft.
 - Locally quarried limestone and sandstone exterior
 - Original limestone wall surrounds the property
 - Intricately designed Red Oak interior
 - Purchased by C. Bascom Slemp in 1929, starting in motion a series of events that eventually led to the site's incorporation as a Museum in the Virginia State Parks system

Physical Resources



- The Carriage House
 - Located West of the Museum building
 - Constructed around the same period as the Museum (exact date unknown)
 - 2,392 sq ft
 - Painted brick exterior
 - Currently utilized to store the Museum's Collections while they are not on display

Physical Resources



- Administrative Offices
 - Located across the street, northwest of the Museum
 - Constructed ~1940
 - 4,128 sq ft
 - Wood framed structure with mixed exterior of brick, vinyl siding and aluminum siding
 - Currently utilized as offices for Museum staff as well as a staff meeting room

Physical Resources



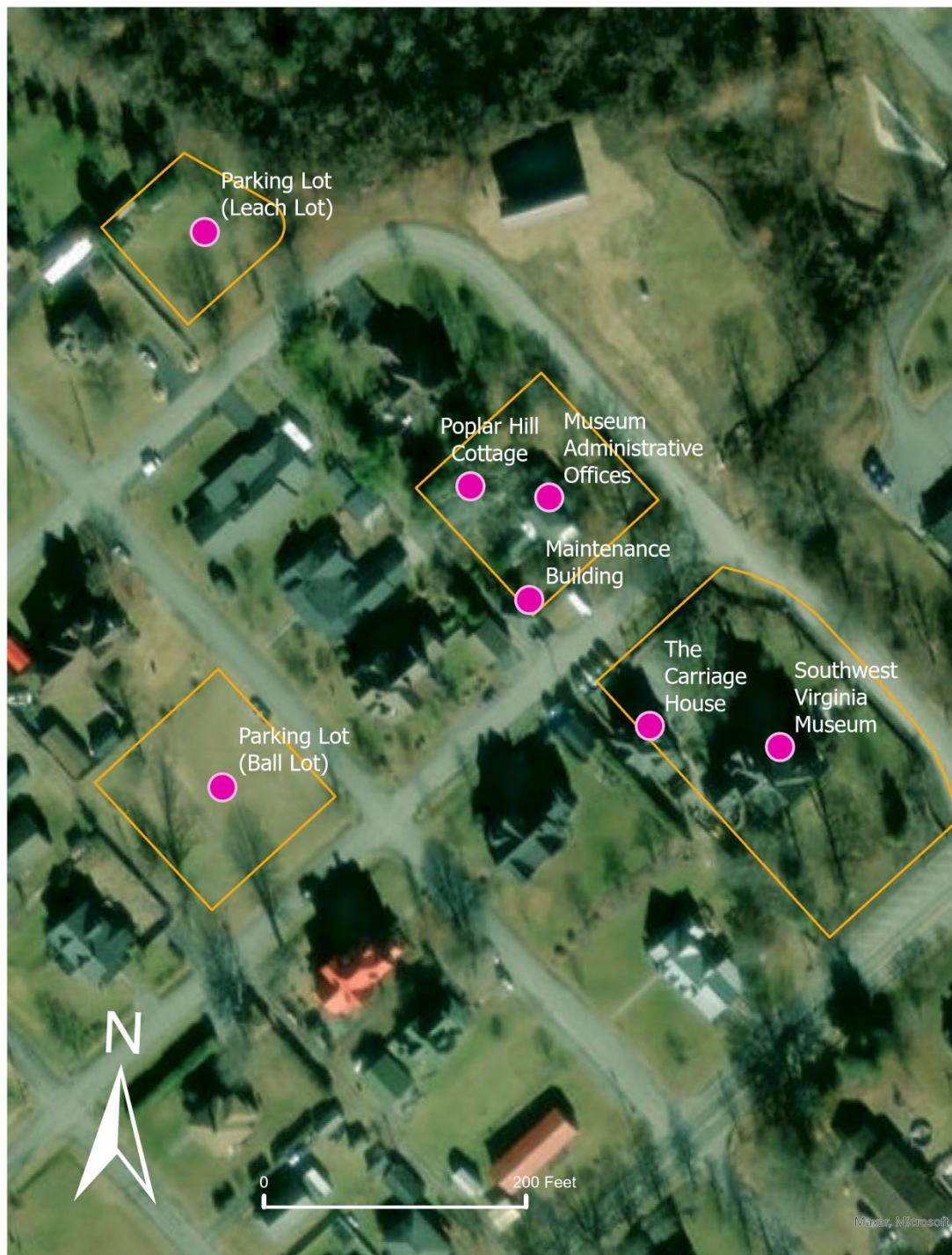
- **Poplar Hill Cottage**
 - Located across the street, northwest of the Museum
 - Constructed 1985
 - 1,282 sq ft
 - Wood framed structure with mixed exterior of brick, vinyl siding and aluminum siding
 - Quaint cottage available for overnight rental by Park Visitors
 - Three Bedrooms
 - Two Full Bathrooms
 - Kitchen
 - Living Room
 - Up to 8 Guests

Physical Resources



- Other Structures:
 - Park Manager Residence
 - Maintenance Building
 - Various Storage Sheds
 - Museum Lot's Stone Wall
 - Ball Lot (W) and Leach Lot (NW)
 - Utilized primarily for parking at special events

Map of Key Physical Resources





Natural Resources

- The Park's Victorian Gardens and landscaped surrounding provide many species, including native species, that add natural beauty to the site, enhancing the visitors' experience:

Native Species:		
Common Name	Genus	Species
American Holly	Ilex	americana
Bee Balm	Monarda	spp.
Black Walnut	Juglans	nigra
Flowering Dogwood	Cornus	florida
Lily of the Valley	Convallaria	majalis
Red Maple	Acer	rubra
Rhododendron	Rhododendron	catawba
Sugar Maple	Acer	saccharum
Tulip Poplar	Liriodendron	tulipifera
White Ash	Fraxinus	americana
White Oak	Fagus	alba
Winterberry	Ilex	verticillata
Yucca	Yucca	aloifolia

[Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation](#)

Natural Resources



- Challenges
 - Invasive Species
 - Plants (e.g. Privet)
 - Insects (e.g. Emerald Ash Borer)



Emerald Ash Borer

Credit: David Cappaert, MSU, bugwood.org, invasivespeciesva.org

Cultural Resources

- Overview of the Overall Collection
 - A Brief History
 - The Role of C. Bascom Slemp and Janie Slemp Newman
 - Purchase of the Ayers House (1929)
 - Creation of the Slemp Foundation (1940s)
 - The Museum as a Satellite of Hungry Mother State Park (1948)
 - The Role of James True (Curator, 1946-1974)
 - Stand alone Virginia State Park (1988)
 - Celebrating 75th Anniversary this year



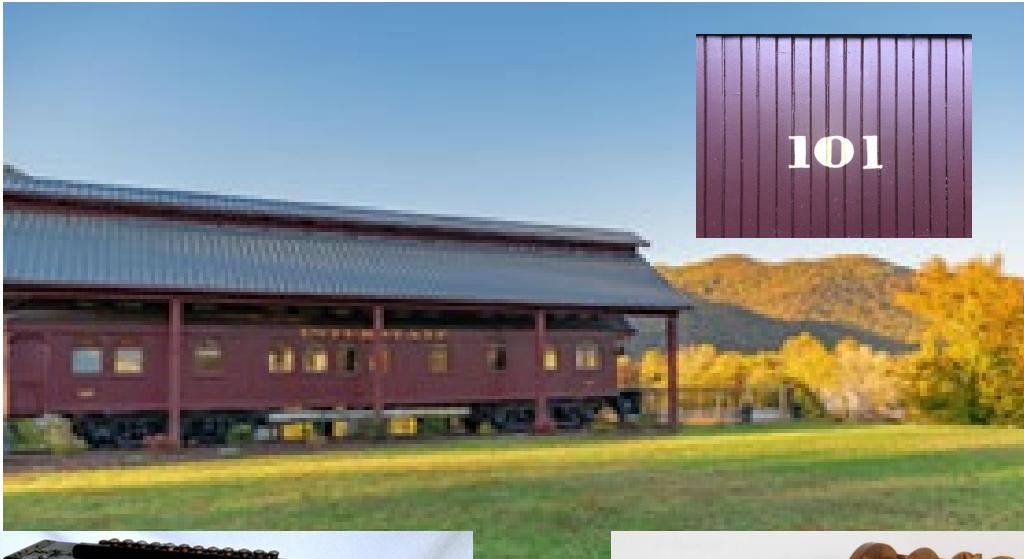
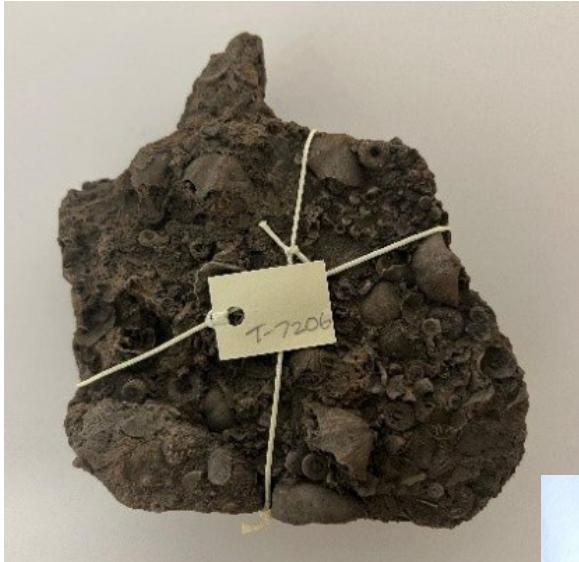
Cultural Resources

- Overall Collection Includes:
 - 4,600+ Photographs
 - 3,800+ Documents
 - 2,000+ Books
 - 50,000+ Additional Artifacts and Natural Specimens

Contains objects consisting of wood, stone, leather, metal, glass, textiles and other materials. Human-produced antiquities found in the collection span at least 6,000 years, along with natural history specimens that can reach back millions of years. With such a vast array of objects, the collection is certainly diverse, and incrementally expanding (within scope).



Selected Sample of Artifacts



Public Input Opportunities

- Your Input is Needed
 - Please complete the paper survey
 - Turn in on back table before you leave
- Survey will also be available online on the project webpage:
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/sw-masterplan>
- Input will be used to help inform the SWVA Museum park experience as well as future development and staffing needs



The background of the slide is a wide-angle photograph of a mountainous landscape under a dramatic sky. The mountains are covered in green and autumn-colored trees. The sky is filled with large, white and grey clouds against a blue backdrop.

Wrap Up

Please email comments to Samantha Wangsgard, Chief Planner by May 4th, at: samantha.wangsgard@dcr.virginia.gov

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