

State Trails Advisory Committee Meeting

Samantha Wangsgard, Chief Environmental Planner

Taylor Jenkins, Environmental Program Planner



October 24, 2023

Meeting Logistics

- Place microphones on mute
- Enter comments and questions in Chat Box
- Presentation and recording will be available after the meeting



Agenda

- I. Welcome and Attendance
- II. Icebreaker
- III. VDOT State Trails Office Update
- IV. STAC Survey and Discussion
- V. Draft Standard Operating Procedures
- VI. Next Meeting



Icebreaker







STATE TRAILS OFFICE

Statewide Trails Plan Survey and Public Outreach

| Torsha Bhattacharya, Ph.D.

STAC Fall Meeting October 24, 2023

AGENDA

1. State Trails Office
2. Multiuse Trails Definition
3. Statewide Trails Plan
4. Upcoming Public engagement
 - Online regional public forums
 - Focus Groups



*The Virginia Creeper Trail,
Southwest Virginia*

State Trails Office

- Sets expectation of Statewide Trails Plan
- Outlines schedule of engagement activities
- Provides ways to get involved

<https://www.virginiadot.org/trails>

The screenshot shows the VDOT website with a blue header bar containing the VDOT logo, "Virginia Department of Transportation", and links for "About", "Jobs", "Contact", "Maps", "511", and "SMART SCALE". Below the header is a "REPORT A ROAD PROBLEM" button with a phone icon and the number "800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623)". The main content area has a banner for "Virginia State Trails Office" with navigation links: "Travel Center", "Newsroom", "Info Center", "Business Center", "Programs", and "Projects & Studies". A search bar is also present. The page content includes sections for "Traffic Information" (VDOT 511), "SMART SCALE" (Funding the Right Transportation Projects in Virginia), "Virginia Roads" (Your one-stop source for VDOT maps, data and project info), and "Connect With Us!" (Visit Our Social Media Pages). The "About the Office" section describes the office's role in developing a State Trails Plan and coordinating with other agencies. The "Activities" section lists items such as developing a statewide trails plan and a trails clearinghouse. The "Project Status" section mentions the scoping phase of the Statewide Trails Plan.

Traffic Information
511 offers real-time traffic info. Anytime you need it, anywhere you are.
SMART SCALE Funding the Right Transportation Projects in Virginia
Virginia Roads
Your one-stop source for VDOT maps, data and project info.
VIRGINIA ROADS
Connect With Us!
Visit Our Social Media Pages »

About the Office:
The State Trails Office is an interdepartmental office housed at the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The General Assembly through the June 2022 State Budget process instructed VDOT to establish a State Trails Office and directed the office to:

- Develop a State Trails Plan and State Trails Information Clearinghouse consistent with recommendations in the January 2022 [Report of Virginia Multi-Use Trails Initiative](#).
- Coordinate with the [State Trails Advisory Committee \(STAC\)](#) and the [Department of Conservation and Recreation \(DCR\)](#).

Activities:

- The State Trails office has begun working on the following items:
- Developing a Statewide Trails Plan that will help inform the development of connected, safe, and accessible trail networks throughout Virginia.
- Developing a trails clearinghouse or "Trails Resource Hub" to serve as a one-stop-shop for trails related.
- Supporting VDOT Districts with implementing the five General Assembly identified trails.
- Collaborating with other VDOT Departments and State, Regional and Local Agencies.

Project Status:

- **Statewide Trails Plan: Scoping Phase**
Over the next 12 months the State Trails Office will be conducting outreach and engagement as part of the statewide trails planning effort.

State Trails Office Updates

- Stakeholder outreach and engagement
- Statewide Trails Plan
- Trails Clearinghouse/Resource Hub



STAC Survey Participants

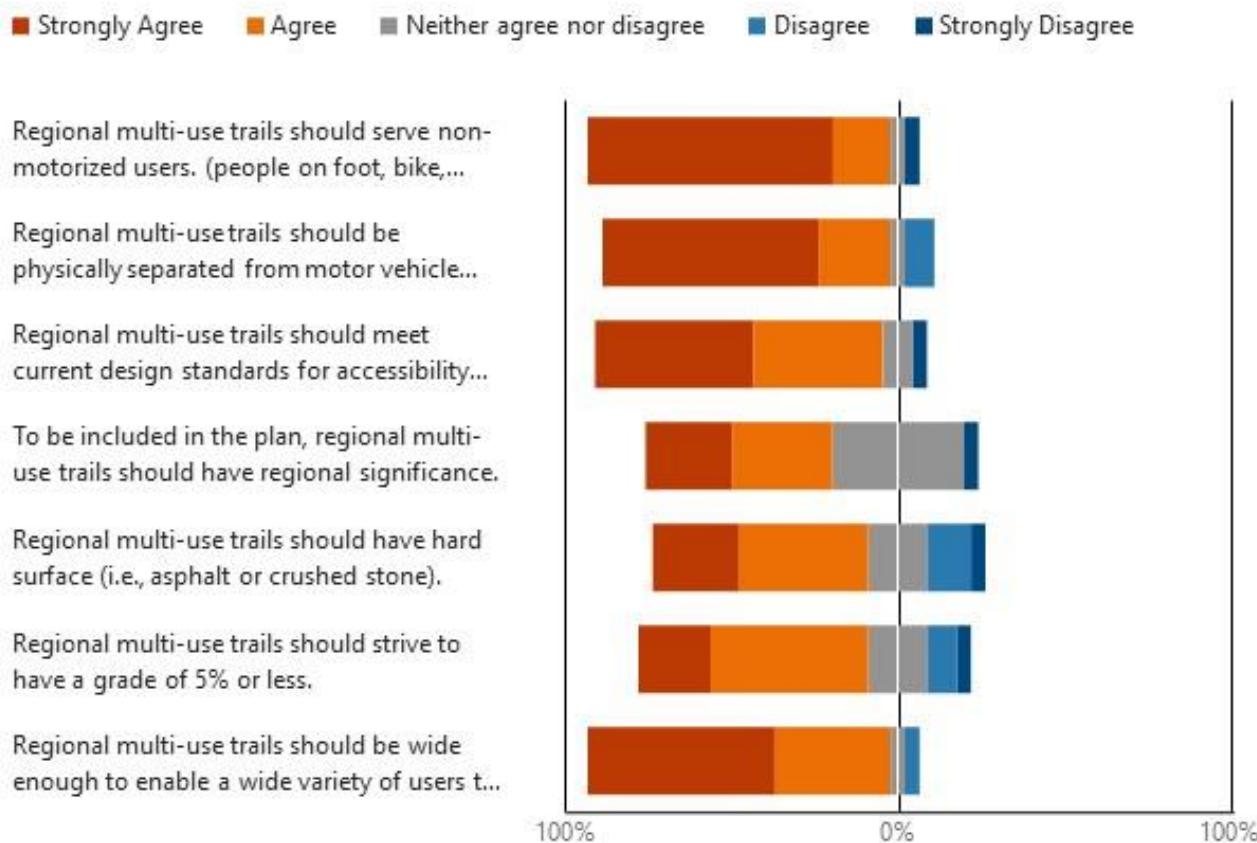
VDOT	James River Association
MORE The Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiast Inc.	Virginia Recreation and Parks Society/James City County
Virginia Trails Alliance	Virginia Department of Health
DCR Planning and Recreation Resources	Virginia Outdoors Foundation
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	Southwest Regional Recreation Authority (Spearhead Trails)
Virginia Capital Trail Foundation	Friends of the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail
Virginia State Parks	Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
Virginia Horse Council	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Department of Wildlife Resources	USFS - George Washington & Jefferson National Forests
Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission	National Park Service, Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)
The Nature Conservancy	

STAC Survey Result

Survey responses were related to:

- Ongoing collaboration
- Representing the full spectrum of trail users and trail types
- Involvement in State Trails Planning and implementation

Rate your agreement with the following components of the regional multi-use trail



Multi use Trails definition for Statewide Trails Plan



Regional public forums

Format

- Three online forums
- Provide opportunities for the public to share questions and engage with the STO
- Duration: 90 minutes with revolving public attendance
 - Promote the engagement opportunity
 - Encourage people in respective districts to attend the forums

Details of Public Forums

Western Region Virtual Town Hall:

Bristol, Staunton, Salem,
and Lynchburg Districts

 DATE:
Monday, October 30

 TIME:
6:00 to 7:30 PM

Register for the
Virtual Town Hall



bit.ly/STOwestern

Eastern Region Virtual Town Hall:

Richmond and Hampton Roads Districts

 DATE:
Thursday,
November 2

 TIME:
6:00 to 7:30 PM

Register for the
Virtual Town Hall



bit.ly/STOeastern

Northern Region Virtual Town Hall:

Northern Virginia, Culpeper,
and Fredericksburg Districts

 DATE:
Wednesday,
November 1

 TIME:
6:30 to 8:00 PM

Register for the
Virtual Town Hall



bit.ly/STOnorthern

Western VDOT Districts

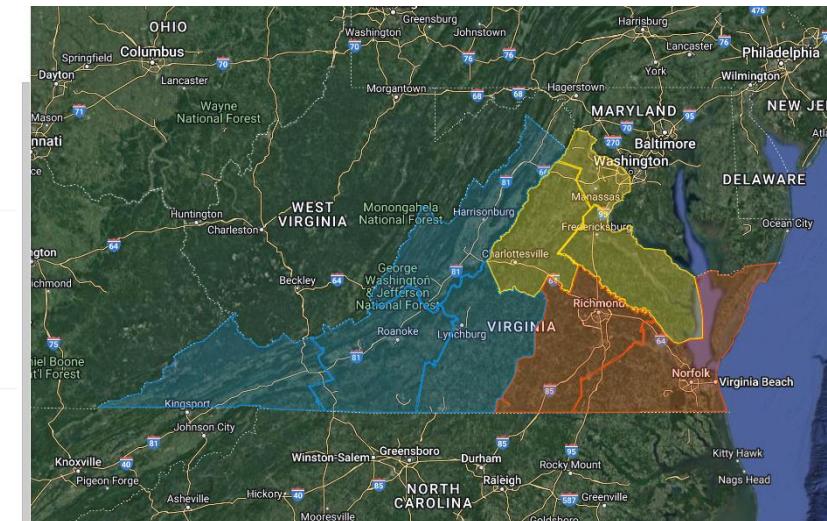
-  All items
- Staunton District
- Lynchburg District
- Salem District
- Bristol District

Northern VDOT Districts

-  All items
- Northern Virginia District
- Fredericksburg District
- Culpeper District

Eastern VDOT Districts

-  All items
- Richmond District
- Hampton Roads District



Focus Groups

Format

- Five online in-depth discussion regarding Multiuse Trails
 - 8-10 participants per group
 - December 5th, 6th, 7th
 - Trail users, non-users, trail advocates
-
- To express your interest in being considered for the focus groups: <https://forms.microsoft.com/g/CULQDTzJkU>



Contact us:

Website:

vdot.virginia.gov/trails

Contact the State Trails Office:

statetrailsoffice@vdot.virginia.gov



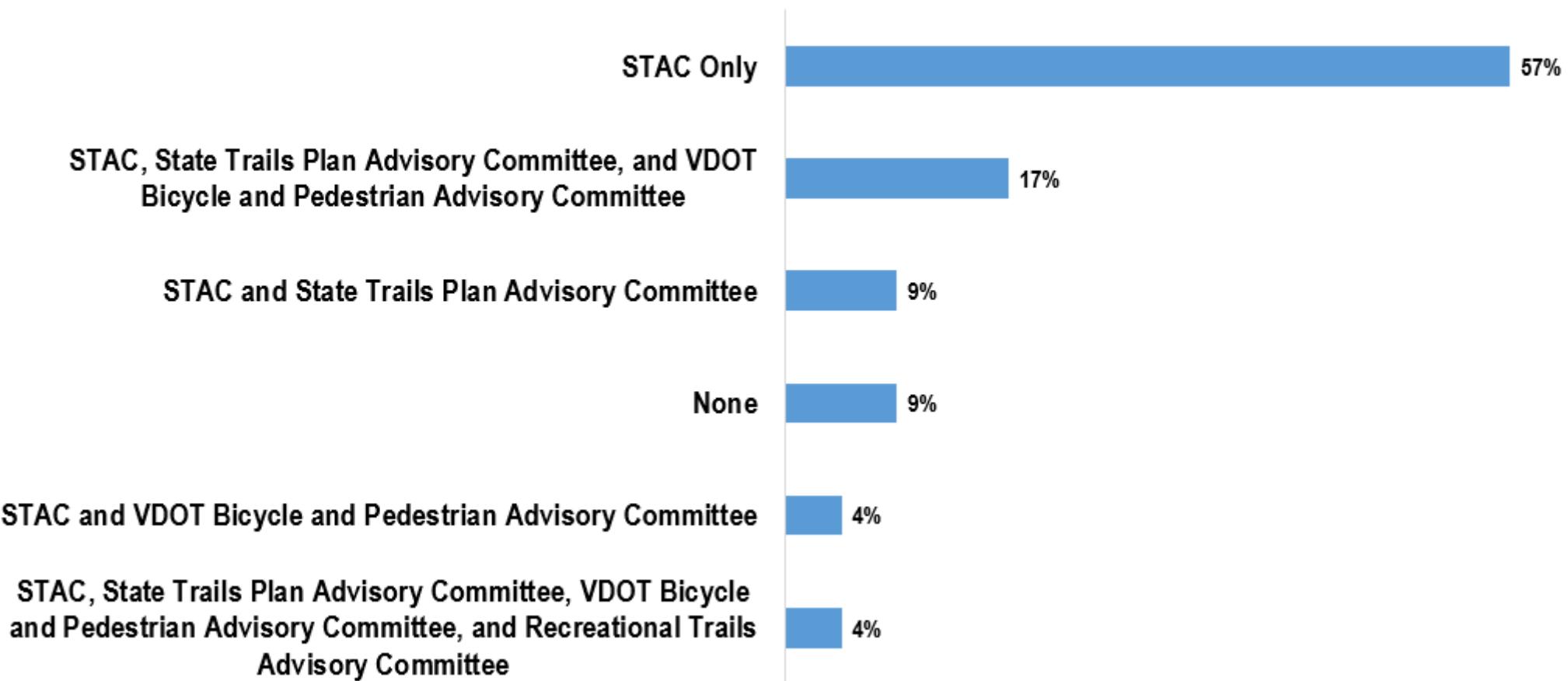
STAC Survey Overview

- Open from August 9th to September 8th and received 23 responses
- Purpose to advise VDOT State Trails Office on trails definitions for the State Trails Plan and provide feedback regarding the future of STAC

STAC Survey Overview

Future of STAC

Which of the following groups are you currently a member of?



STAC Survey Overview

Future of STAC

Indicate your response to the following statement: The roles and responsibilities of STAC are clearly identified.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

STAC Survey Overview

Code Excerpt

“The State Trails Advisory Committee is hereby established as an advisory committee of the Department of Conservation and Recreation to assist the Commonwealth in developing and implementing a statewide system of attractive, sustainable, connected, and enduring trails for the perpetual use and enjoyment of the citizens of the Commonwealth and future generations.”

STAC Survey Overview

Code Excerpt

The Advisory Committee shall examine and provide recommendations regarding:

- Options to close the gaps in a statewide system of trails as described in § 10.1-204.1
- Creative public and private funding strategies and partnerships to leverage resources to fund the development of trails
- Integrated approaches to promote and market trail values and benefits
- The development of specialty trails, including concepts related to old-growth forest trails
- Strategies to encourage and create linkages between communities and open space
- Strategies to foster communication and networking among trail stakeholders
- Strategies to increase tourism and commercial activities associated with a statewide trail system
- Strategies to enhance the involvement of organizations that promote outdoor youth activities...
- Other practices, standards, statutes, and guidelines... including methods for receiving input regarding potential trail impacts upon owners of underlying or neighboring properties

STAC Survey Overview

Future of STAC

What do you see as STAC's role in coordinating with the VDOT State Trails Office?

- Received 19 responses
- Major themes:
 - Collaboration
 - Decision-making
 - Representing the full spectrum of trail users and trail types





STAC Survey Overview

Future of STAC

What content would you like to see during future STAC meetings?

- Received 14 responses
- Major themes:
 - Case studies
 - Funding programs and policies
 - Strategic planning
 - Best practices
 - Workshops
 - General updates

STAC Survey Overview

Future of STAC

What structural changes would you like to see for the STAC?

- Received 11 responses
- Major themes:
 - Subcommittees
 - More authority
 - Formalized membership criteria





Draft Standard Operating Procedures

- Sets policy, procedures, and identifies roles for the DCR State Trails program area
- Provides additional structure for the STAC
 - Committee size
 - Committee composition
 - Appointment to STAC and term limits
 - Voting guidelines
 - Meeting logistics

Next Meeting

- In Person, 2024 VaULT: Virginia Land and Conservation Greenways Conference
- Meeting topics

