

Sky Meadows State Park

Master Plan

Public Meeting May 19, 2021



Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

Agenda

Introductions

Melissa Baker

Director of Virginia State Parks

Kevin Bowman

Park Manager, Sky Meadows State Park

Bill Conkle

DCR Park Planner

- State Park History
- Intro to Sky Meadows State Park
- Master Plan Process
- Review Sky Meadows master plan
- Public Comment via Chat Box



Housekeeping

- Place all phones / mics on mute
- All comments & questions accepted in Chat Box
(These will be recorded and responses will made prior to June 20, 2021)
- This presentation will be available online following the meeting

Additional comments will be received until June 20, via email or in writing to:

Bill Conkle, Park Planner
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
Bill.Conkle@dcr.virginia.gov
804-786-5492 or by fax @ 804-371-7899





Meeting Purpose

To present the park master plan and facility phasing. Public input is encouraged regarding recommended park amenities. Attendees will have the opportunity to provide input with regard to priorities for facilities and outdoor recreation opportunities.



Introduction to state parks

DCR Mission

Conserve, protect, enhance and advocate wise use of the Commonwealth's unique natural, historical, recreational, scenic and cultural resources.

State Park Mission

To conserve the natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources of the Commonwealth and provide recreational and educational opportunities consistent with the good stewardship of these lands, waters and facilities that leave them unimpaired for future generations.



History of Virginia State Parks

The first 6 parks...out of the Depression

1936: Virginia opens a system of 6 state parks...most were a combination of donated land plus state funds for development



The System Grows

1940's through 1980's:

A steady procession of new parks acquired and developed through a combination of funds:

donations, federal grant money and state capital development



Voters support more growth and development

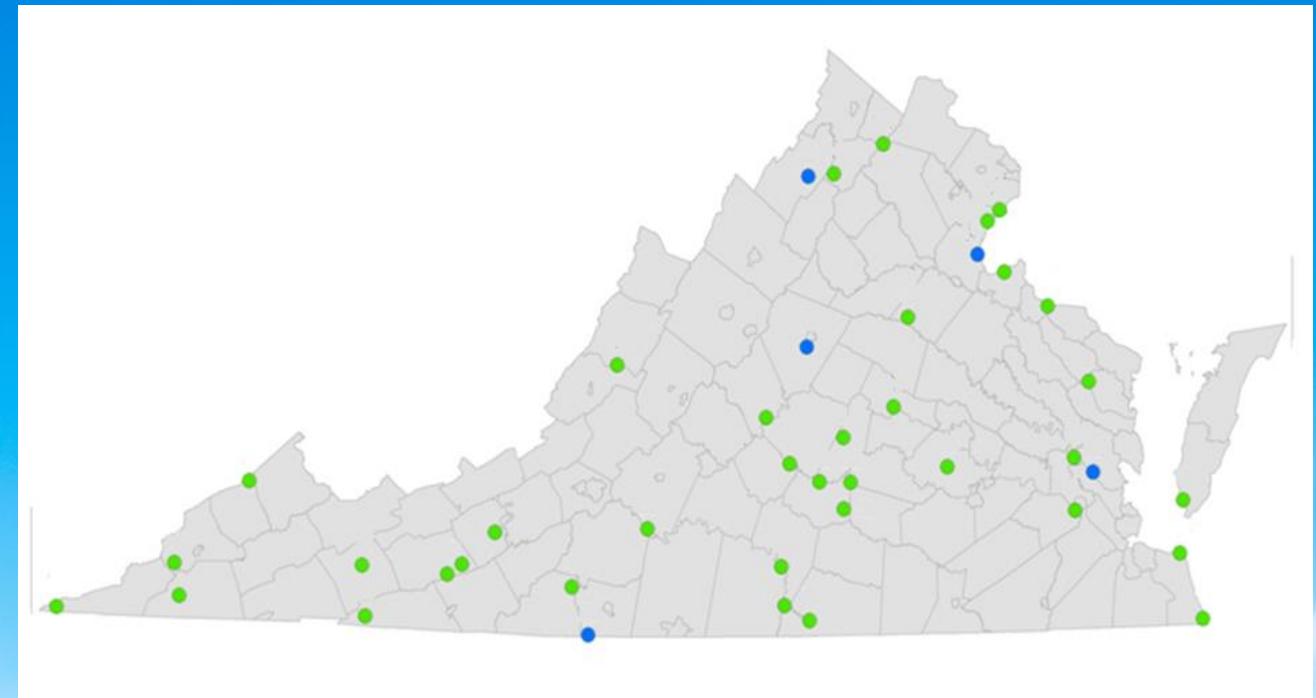
1990's through present: Two major bond referendums in 1992 and 2002 funded more than \$214 million in funds; 5 new parks and land for 6 more; 31 natural areas; 296 building projects: campgrounds, cabins, support facilities, etc.

We continue to acquire lands, largely by donation or discounted sales... the challenge is to find the development funds.



Today's Virginia State Park System

40 parks, 4 under development
75,895 acres
34 historic register sites
662 miles of trails
32 parks with overnight facilities
11 day use parks
29 visitor centers
99 picnic shelters
11 swimming beaches
4 swimming pools
2 restaurants; 19 snack bars



Park Services and Facilities

Each park has a unique set of facilities, activities and services

Day Uses: hiking,
swimming, picnicking,
boating, bicycling,
horse riding,
canoeing, rafting

Overnight: cabins
and camping

Programs, education,
interpretation

Conference and
meeting facilities



The relevancy of state parks in the 21st century & beyond

Parks are a part of the Community:
Friends Groups, volunteerism, economic benefit.

Solutions to many of today's challenges: "Nature Deficit Disorder", daily stress, and the need for affordable recreational opportunities.

The need for parks is greater today than it has ever been ... places to reconnect to nature, to be with families and friends, and to re-establish personal well being.



Sky Meadows State Park

A total of 1,860 acres located in
Clarke and Fauquier Counties.





Mission

To provide minimal impact recreation, thus allowing people to feel a part of the land, a part of the site, and a connection with the agricultural practices that formed this unique pastoral landscape over time.



Guiding Theme

Sky Meadows State Park preserves an integral part of the Historic Crooked Run Valley's pastoral landscape creating a place of rich natural diversity, peaceful recreation, and personal rejuvenation.





Nature

Inviting exploration of rich natural diversity.

Sky Meadows' nature is a legacy of an ongoing dance between human agricultural practices and native ecosystems.



Agriculture

Exploring day-to-day life of an historic Piedmont farm.

Crop fields, gardens, pastures and grazing livestock continue a vital agricultural tradition that showcases the day-to-day life on a historic middle-class Piedmont farm.



History

Connecting visitors with the historic cultural framework of the continuing American experience.

Within the historic structures, artifacts, stone walls and old roadbeds lie the stories of those who shaped this pastoral landscape from the Colonial Era to today.

Rest and Rejuvenation

Providing opportunities to escape the pressures and routines of daily life.

Breathtaking vistas, scenic multi-use trails and a primitive campground invite deep restoration and rejuvenation for the mind, body and spirit.





Trails

- 22 miles of hiking trails
- 10.5 miles of equestrian and biking trails
- Sensory Explorers' Trail



Backcountry Camping

- Open Year-Round
- Individual and Group Sites



Family and Youth

- Children's Discovery Area
- Year-round events and programs

Dark Sky Park

International Dark Sky Association



Staff

Full-Time:

- Park Manager
- Chief Ranger Visitor Experience
- Chief Ranger Law Enforcement / Operations
- Office Manager
- Park Ranger Law Enforcement

Part-Time:

- Maintenance Rangers
- Contact Rangers
- Administrative Assistants
- Park Interpreters
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Trails Coordinator

Volunteers and Partners





Financials

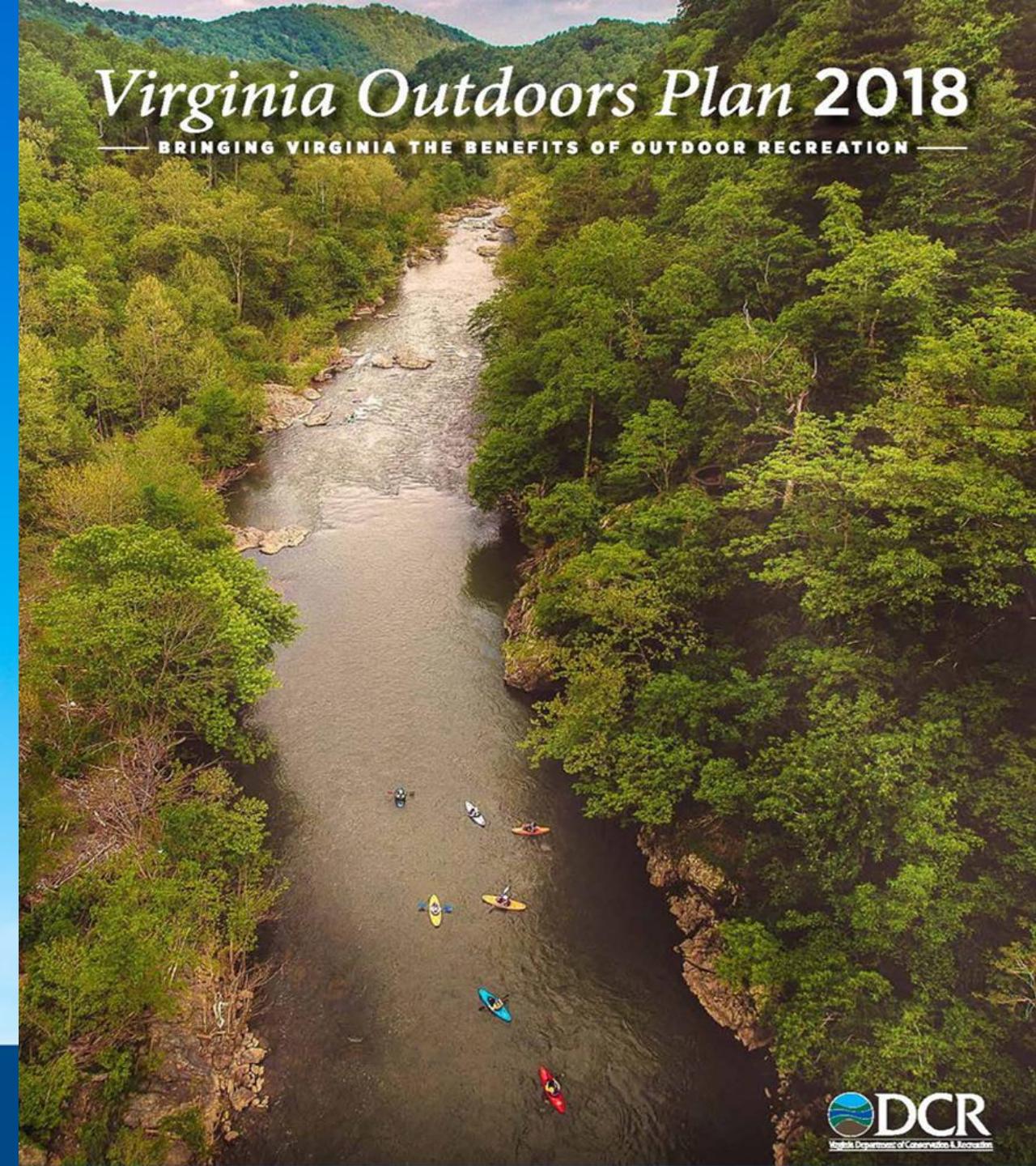
- \$334,000 Operating Budget
- \$372,000 in Revenue (FY'20)

Sky Meadows State Park

Gateway to the Crooked Run Valley



Master Plan Process



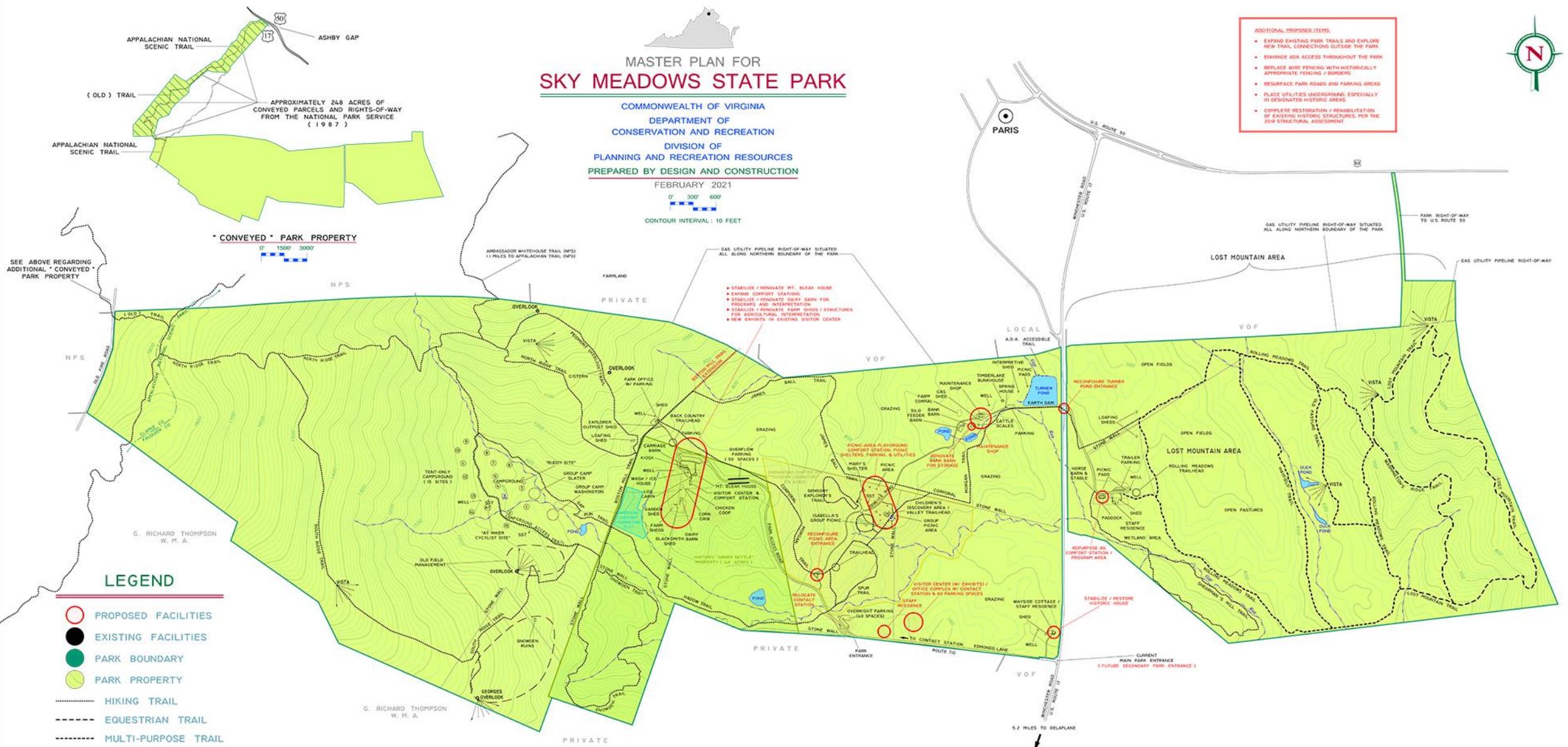
State Park Master Planning Code

§ 10.1-200.1. State park master planning

- (i) for all **existing state parks**, (ii) substantial **land acquisitions**,
(iii) prior to major **improvements**
- A **guide for the development, utilization and management** of its natural, cultural and historic resources
- Developed in stages with public input
- Required to be updated every 10 years



Sky Meadows State Park Master Plan



Sky Meadows Phase 1

- Reconfigure Turner Pond / Lost Mountain / Route 17 intersection, particularly for safe ingress and egress for Turner Pond, to include safe hiking / biking / equestrian crossing
- Reconfigure Edmonds Lane / Picnic Area road intersection for safe ingress / egress
- Construct a Maintenance Shop
- Road improvements / resurfacing of existing roads (to include bike lanes) and parking areas



Sky Meadows Phase 1 (continued)

- Enhance the Abner Settle Historic Area:
 - Stabilize and renovate Mount Bleak House
 - Stabilize and renovate dairy barn for programs and interpretation
 - Stabilize and renovate farm structures for agricultural use and interpretation
 - Expand comfort stations in historic area
 - Replace wire fencing with period fencing and restore stone walls in historic area
 - Place utility wires underground in historic area
- Stabilize and restore Wayside Cottage (c. 1781) as staff residence
- Complete restoration/rehabilitation of Historic structures, per the 2019 Structural Assessment
- Enhance picnic area with utilities and comfort station



Sky Meadows Phase 2

- Stabilize and renovate Bank Barn for maintenance storage
- Construct Visitor Center (with exhibits) and park office (5000 sf) on Edmonds Lane
- Construct a new contact station with comfort station



Sky Meadows Phase 3

- Staff residence
- Renovate and repurpose current horse barn as a comfort station

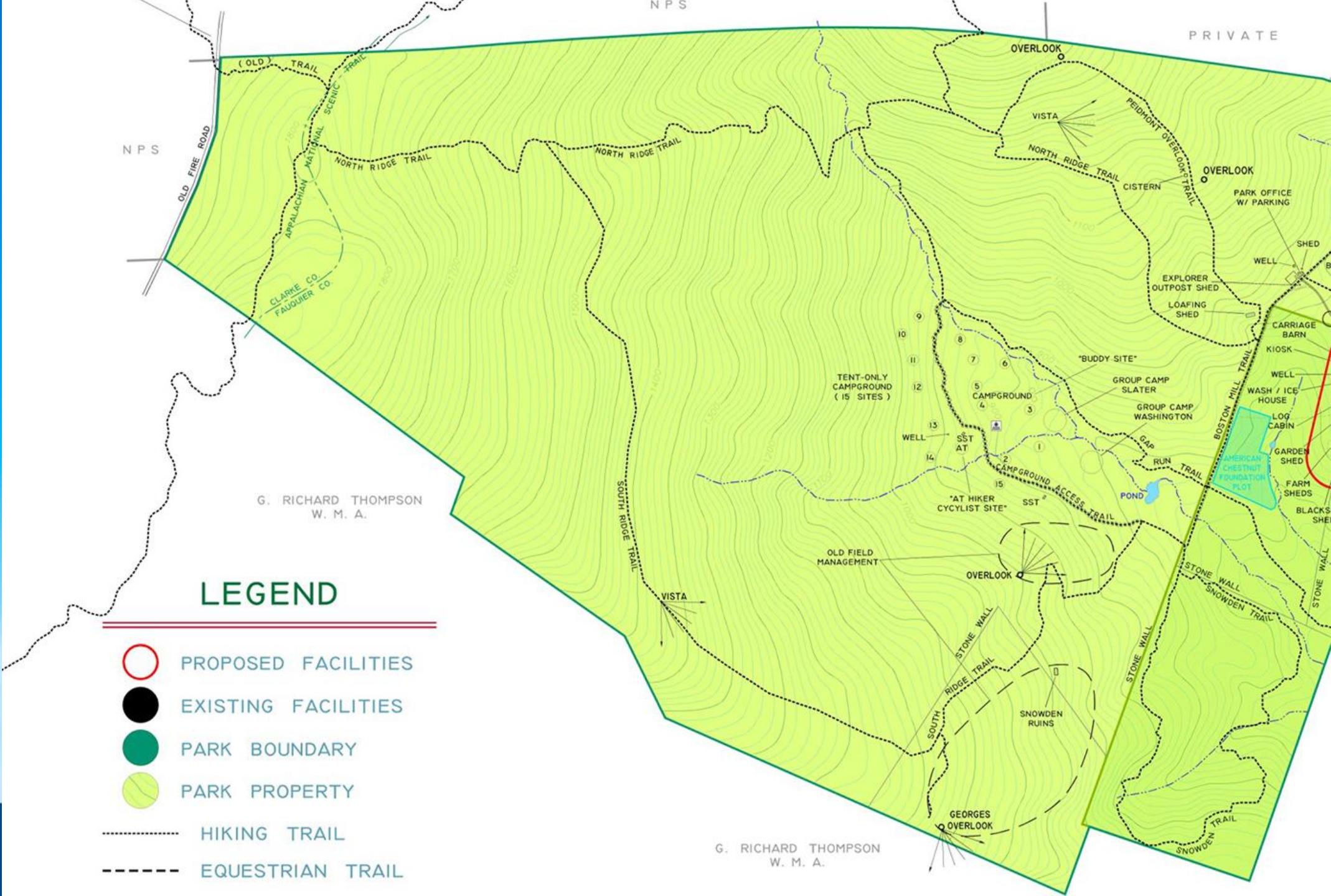


Sky Meadows State Park Master Plan

Blowup of West
side of park &
Appalachian Trail

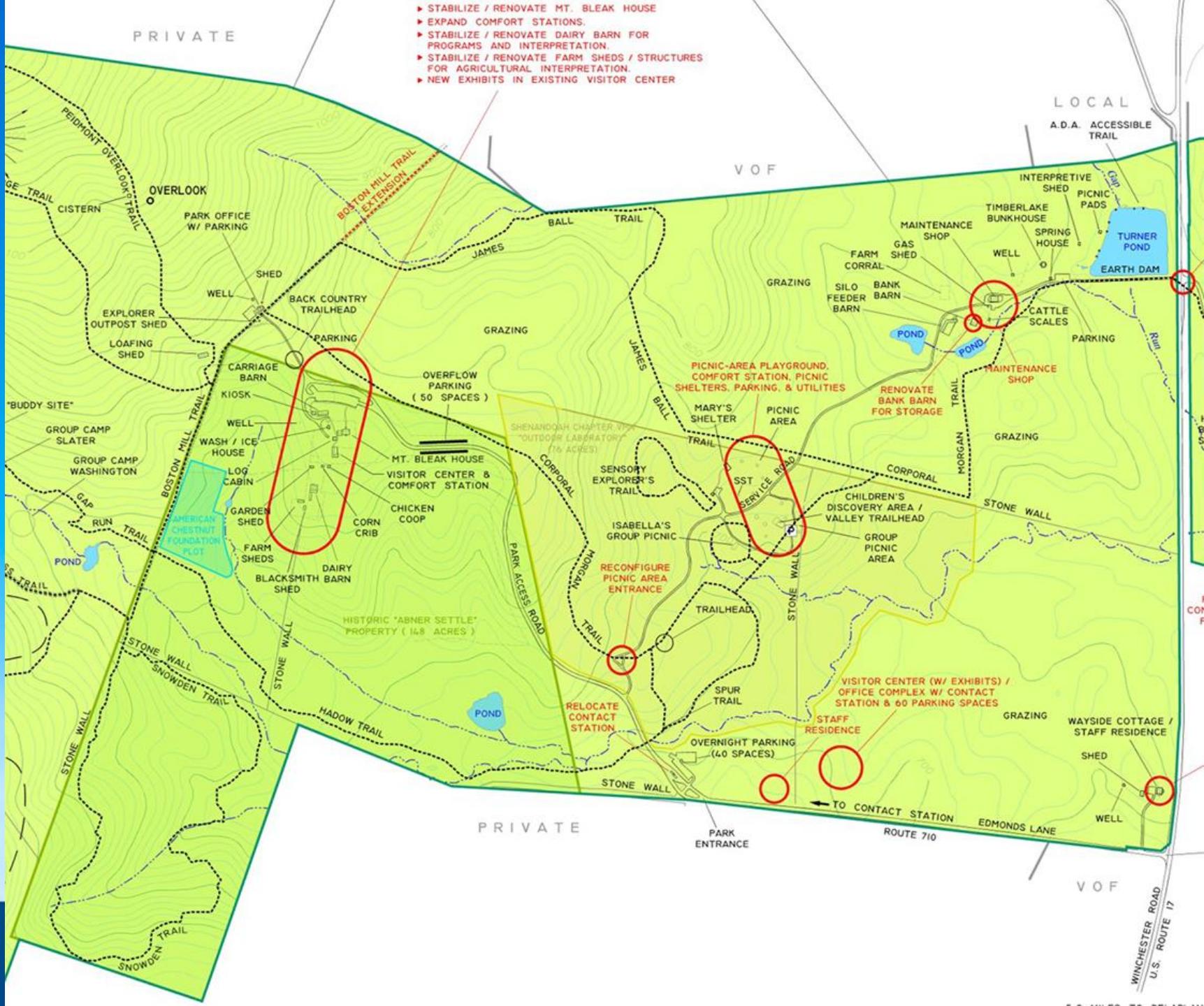
LEGEND

- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK BOUNDARY
- PARK PROPERTY
- HIKING TRAIL
- EQUESTRIAN TRAIL



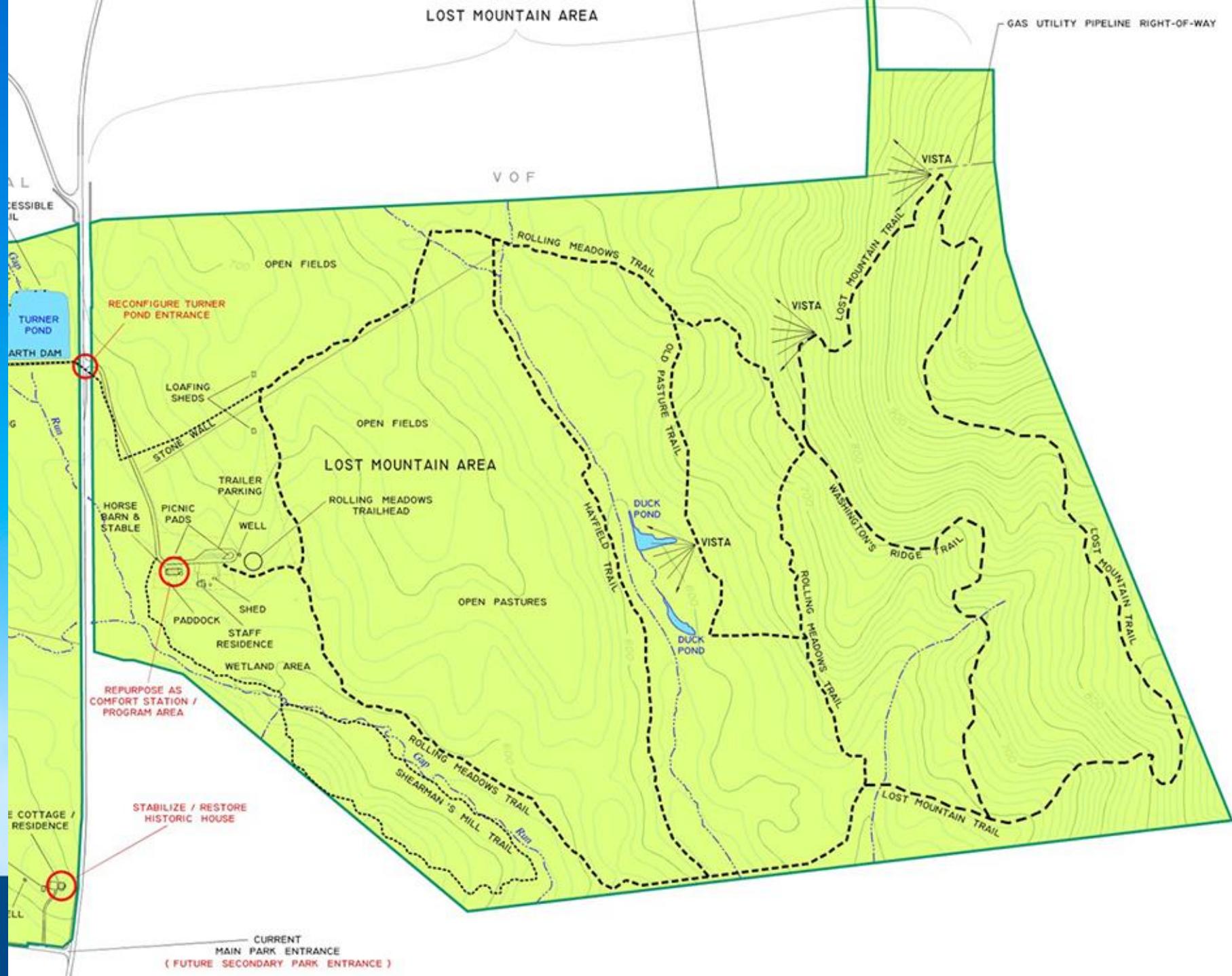
Sky Meadows State Park Master Plan

Blowup of Central park property with Historic Area



Sky Meadows State Park Master Plan

Blowup East of U.S. 17
(Lost Mountain Area)





Public Input Session Guidelines

Bill Conkle, Facilitator

**Please make comments
in the chatbox.**

**These will be recorded and responded
to by June 20, 2021**





Send comments

Written comments will be accepted up until 5:00 p.m. on June 20, 2021.

Please send to:

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600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

or email Bill.Conkle@dcr.virginia.gov
or by fax to 804-371-7899.





Next Steps

- Update the Executive Summary and Map
- Present to Board of Conservation and Recreation for recommended approval
- Send updated plan to General Assembly for 30 day review
- Adoption of plan by DCR Director



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