



Your Sweet Spot in the Mountains:

**A Feasibility Study for a Virginia
State Park in Highland County**

Ascent Consulting Group
University of Virginia, Urban &
Environmental Planning
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Love Works near Monterey, Virginia. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

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Boning Dong

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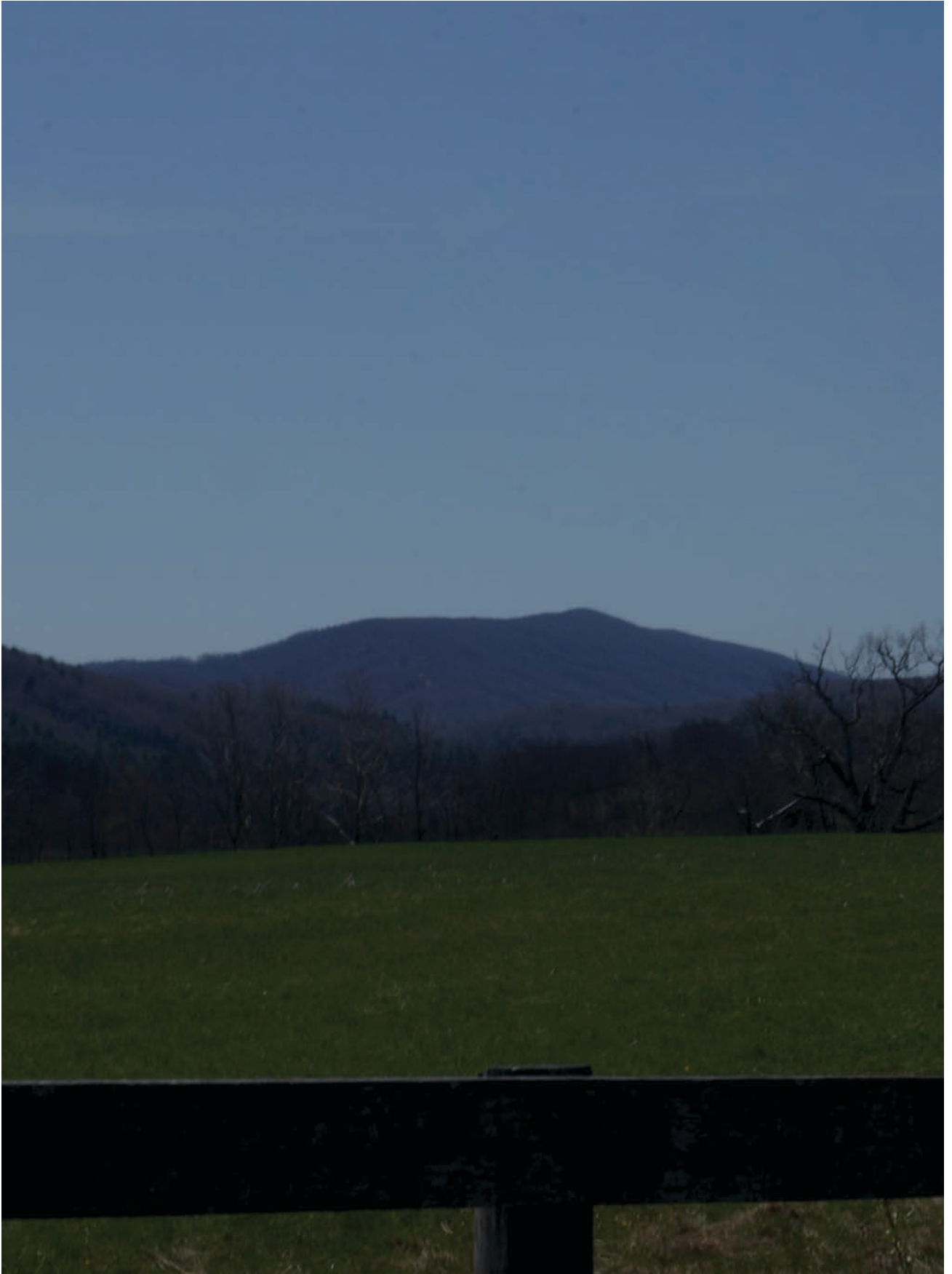
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Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Executive Summary	6
Introduction	11
Highland County in Context	12
Precedent Analysis	20
Analyzing Potential Park Sites	26
Bullpasture Gorge	28
Dividing Waters Farm	30
Hayfields Farm	32
Jack Mountain Village	34
Evaluating Specific Potential Sites for Suitability as a State Park	48
Final Site Recommendation: Hayfields Farm	50
Next Steps	56
Clinch River Valley Initiative	60
Seven Bends State Park	61
Complementary Initiatives	66
Natural Bridge State Park: A Virginia Public-Private Partnership	71
Biscuit Run State Park: A Public-Public Partnership	72
Conclusion	77
Appendix A: Surveys and Survey Analysis	79
Appendix B: Economic Impact Analysis	108



View of Hayfields Farm. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Executive Summary

Recognized nationwide for its bucolic character and stunning beauty, Highland County's rolling mountains and lush valleys have long attracted settlers and visitors who wish to engage with nature. However, residents and visitors alike lack access to many of the county's abundant natural assets. Further, as the Highland County community seeks to revitalize its economy, it recognized the missed opportunity that this lack of access represents. As such, residents of the county have long sought a solution that will increase public access to the county's natural resources and spur economic development within the county while preserving the community's rural charm.

To this end, a group of residents, the Friends of Highland County State Park, have been pursuing a state park designation in the county—a solution they believe will achieve all three stated goals. To assist the Friends of Highland County, Ascent Consulting Group, a team of graduate students in the Department of Urban and Environmental Planning at the University of Virginia, have conducted a feasibility study of four park sites in the county.

To conduct this study, our team employed a number of analytical tools. Initial research into the county's geography, history, and contemporary context and the state parks system as a whole was completed to provide relevant background information. Next, the team utilized GIS mapping technology to create a tourist asset inventory and to collect information about various elements of the physical landscape—elevation, slope, hydrology, and bedrock—that would ultimately inform which site, if any, were identified as well-suited for a state park. Our team also visited the four potential sites—Bullpasture Gorge, Dividing Waters

Farm, Hayfields Farm, and Jack Mountain Village—to get a sense of the human experience at each location.

After completing preliminary research, our team sought to assess the need for a state park in Highland County. To do so, we drafted two surveys that were intended to collect information on trends and preferences related to state park usage, to gauge support for a state park in Highland County, and to measure interest in potential park programming options. One survey was targeted at non-resident visitors to the county and was distributed during Highland County's annual Maple Festival. The other survey was intended for residents of the County and was distributed online and in hardcopy at local partner institutions. To encourage participation, our team members were interviewed by a local radio station and a press release was printed in the local newspaper.

Simultaneously, our team conducted an economic impact analysis using the money generating model—a formula that seeks to project how a state park will affect a local economy. This model utilized previously collected data on the tax, job, and income impacts related to tourism in the county and data averages created by our team. Using results of the economic impact analysis, our survey results, and the other data our team collected, we then developed a ranking system to determine which site was most conducive to the development of a state park. We also explored complementary initiatives that may help the county economy grow, increase access to natural assets, and preserve the community's rural character while the park designation process is completed or as supplemental programs that will further a future park's mission.

Our final results have been compiled in this report and were presented to the public

twice in order to receive feedback. The first presentation took place in Charlottesville, Virginia and was attended, primarily, by non-residents who were relatively unfamiliar with the county and the state park proposal. The second presentation occurred in Highland County itself and a significant number of locals attended the gathering, asked questions, and noted additional areas for future inquiry. In addition to the report, our team also prepared various maps that present geographic, economic, and human data visually. We also provided graphics that highlight significant findings and renderings that may act as the first step toward visioning how a state park in Highland County may look should it be implemented.

Key Findings

Throughout our project, Ascent Consulting Group has collected a significant amount of data on a number of topics related to a potential state park in Highland County. Our surveys revealed overwhelming support for a state park in Highland County with ninety-four percent of non-residents and ninety-seven percent of residents indicating they would visit a state park in Highland County. Additionally, respondents confirmed our team's prediction that a vast majority—just under ninety percent—of state park users choose to visit surrounding communities and spend money during their visits. The surveys also shed light on the most desired amenities for a future state park in Highland County: camping, hiking, picnicking, scenic drives and vistas, and wildlife observation.

Our economic impact assessment was also enlightening. By averaging similar state park performance and then using those averages to complete the money generating model, our team learned that sales benefits from tourism related to a state park in Highland County could potentially bring an additional \$4,204,576 to the county each year. Added to the tax, income, and job benefits, a fully

operational state park in the county may improve the local economy by \$9,318,114 per year.

Utilizing all of the data collected, we then developed a scorecard that was used to rank each of the sites for their suitability as a state park. Some scorecard criteria were weighted more heavily because they had been identified by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation or by the Friends of Highland County as significant. Other criteria were weighted more heavily based on the results of our survey. After scoring the sites, our team concluded that Hayfields Farm was the most ideal site for a state farm because of its proximity to other public lands, the potential for agriculture-related programming, the projected economic impact of the site, and its relative cost. Though the site has some drawbacks, our team determined that they were far outweighed by the site's many strengths.

Suggested Next Steps

The state park designation process can be a lengthy one. The work completed to date by the Friends of Highland County and Ascent Consulting Group has occurred squarely within the pre-planning phase. During this phase, stakeholders develop their vision for a state park, conduct research to determine the feasibility and public interest in a state park, and select and acquire a site. Eventually, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation will work with local groups to initiate the official park planning process which includes master planning and public meetings. Once a site has been acquired and a master plan has been produced, it must be approved by the General Assembly and funds for maintenance and development must be appropriated. Because of the political and economic realities surrounding park designation, this process can take years.

Once a park has been designated, it must be developed to promote recreational use—a process that often occurs in phases. The first phase focuses on establishing access points, developing basic infrastructure for day users, and hiring basic park staff. Later phases continue to build the park to its fullest potential following the guidelines laid out in the master plan and its mandated updates. Like the designation process, political and economic realities shape how the development process proceeds and the development process can also take years.

In its quest to designate a state park in the county, the Friends of Highland County State Park and other stakeholders should continue to work through the designation process as required by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Additionally, complementary initiatives should be explored as programming options that supplement the ultimate mission of the park while the designation and development processes are carried out. Finally, Friends of Highland County should continue to build relationships with other government entities, non-profit organizations, higher education institutions, and private actors to build capacity and to leverage the broad support for a state park in the county.

Report Structure

The following report includes two major sections: 1) context and analysis and 2) recommendations and next steps. The first section begins by placing Highland County in its geographic, historic, and modern context. This contextual analysis is followed by a discussion on the relationship of parks to economic development and leads into a discussion of the methodology of this feasibility study. The report concludes with a recommended site for Highland County to pursue for park designation, as well as several complementary initiatives that could be implemented simultaneously.



Introduction

Highland County is uniquely qualified to house a state park. Recognized nationwide for its bucolic character and stunning beauty, the county's rolling mountains and lush valleys have long attracted settlers and visitors who want to engage with nature. However, residents and visitors alike lack access to many of the county's abundant natural assets. Further, as the Highland County community seeks to revitalize its local economy, it recognizes the missed opportunity that this lack of access represents. As such, residents of the county have long sought a solution that will increase public access to the county's natural resources and spur economic development within the county while preserving the community's rural charm.

To this end, a group of residents, the Friends of Highland County State Park, have been pursuing a state park designation in the county—a solution that would achieve all three stated goals. To assist the Friends of Highland County, Ascent Consulting Group, graduate students in the Department of Urban and Environmental Planning at the

University of Virginia, have conducted a feasibility study of four potential park sites in the county.

Through studying the geographic, historic, and contemporary context of Highland County, as well as careful analysis of existing state parks, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation criteria, specific site features, and public comments, this report recommends that state park designation should be pursued for a site within Highland County. Next step recommendations and complementary initiatives are included in this report to facilitate the designation process.

The benefits of a state park cannot be understated for the residents of this county, the immediate region, and the Commonwealth as a whole. Need, support, and feasibility exist for a state park in Highland, and should be undertaken as a priority for the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Highland County in Context

In order to evaluate Highland County's suitability as a home for a new state park and to determine the best site for a state park, Highland County's unique features and the context of the community must be explored and understood. The geographic, historic, and contemporary conditions of Highland County contribute to its distinctive character and present both opportunities for and obstacles to development of a state park in the county.

Geography and Climate

Located in the Alleghany Mountains, Highland County's geography is characterized by the "[h]igh, narrow mountain ridges" that are typical in Virginia's western uplands.ⁱ The mountainous terrain contributes to the county's high average elevation—the highest east of the Mississippi River. Nestled between the ridges, Highland County also boasts narrow valleys and multiple streams and rivers that are both visually striking and useful for local agriculture and recreation. Significantly, the Bullpasture, Cowpasture, and Calfpasture Rivers act as tributaries of the James River. Additionally, stream systems in the county connect with the Potomac River watershed. These river systems not only tie Highland County to the rest of Virginia hydrologically, they act as important historical and cultural links to other parts of the Commonwealth and to the broader Chesapeake Bay region.¹

Highland County is also characterized by significant forestation with roughly three quarters of the county covered by mixed-hardwood forest. Of the forested areas in the county, more than one-third is considered public land with nearly thirty percent of forested lands held by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries ("DGIF") or the George

ⁱ "Excerpt from Economic Overview 2002 Bath and Highland County" (Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, 2002), <http://www.highlandcounty.org/PDF/EconomicOverview.pdf>.

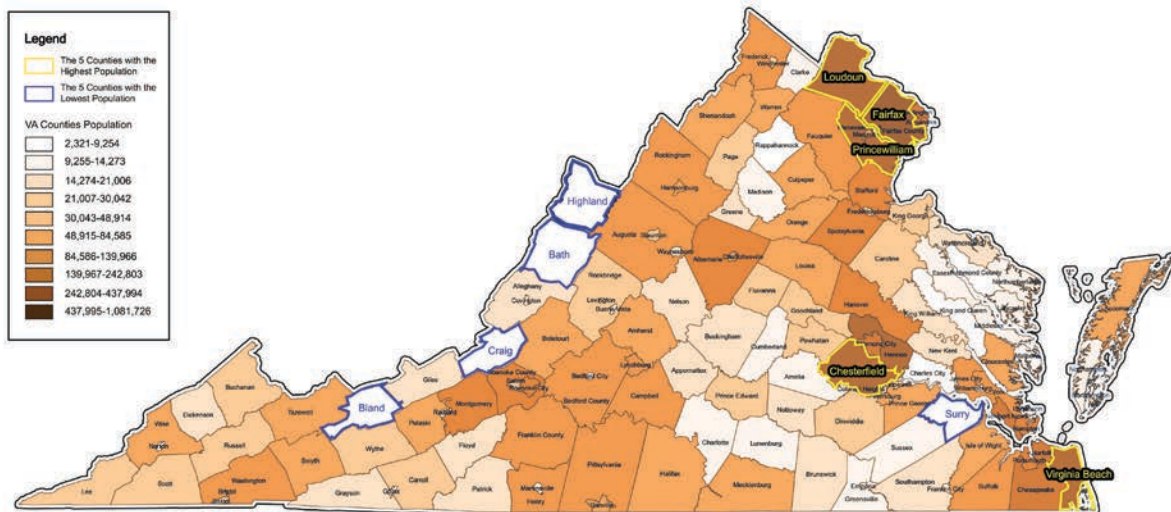


Fig. 1
Virginia population by county. At 2,321 people, Highland County is the least populous county in Virginia.

Highland County's budget is extremely dependent on its property tax base and appropriations from the state. Its major economic sectors and the commuting patterns for those working in Highland County are unsurprising for a rural county whose largest population block is 65 or older.



Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Washington and Jefferson National Forest. These forest resources are an important asset for the county and provide economic, environmental, and recreational benefits for residents and visitors.²

The county's unique geographic features also influence its climate. Unlike other Virginia counties at lower elevations, Highland County's "mountains produce various steering, blocking and modifying effects on storms and air masses." As a result, the county's summer and winter temperatures are cooler, on average, than temperatures in other parts of Virginia. Additionally, Highland County experiences more frequent snowfall than other areas of the Commonwealth.³

History

In addition to its unique geography, Highland County also lays claim to a vibrant history. Originally settled by Scotch-Irish and German immigrants, Highland County was created in 1847 from portions of Bath County and Pendleton County (now located in West Virginia). The Town of Monterey, Highland's most populous settlement, was founded in 1848 and named in honor of the Battle of Monterey, a significant military action during the Mexican-American War in which American troops were led by President Zachary Taylor.⁴

Like many communities throughout the United States, Highland County residents were divided in their opinions of secession prior to the Civil War. During the Virginia Secession Conventions of 1861, Highland's representative voted against leaving the Union. After the Civil War began, Highland residents fought on both sides of the conflict, though the majority of Highland enlisted men fought for the Confederacy. In 1862, Stonewall Jackson's army engaged Union troops at the Battle of McDowell in order to prevent them from entering the Shenandoah

Valley. After Jackson's success, the county chose to remain in the Confederacy, unlike its northern and western neighbor counties that joined the new state of West Virginia. Today, visitors to the county can see the site of the Battle of McDowell and can learn about the Battle through interpretive signage. McDowell is also home to the Highland County Museum where visitors can engage more deeply with the county's Civil War history through its Civil War Orientation Center.⁵

Throughout its history, Highland County's rural character and small population have set it aside as a unique community. Notably, the county's rural setting served as the backdrop for the 1921 silent film, *Tol'able David*. The film, which follows the travails of a young man in a rural community on the Virginia-West Virginia border, was a significant success at the time of its release. In 2007, the Library of Congress determined the film to be "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" and designated it for preservation. *Tol'able David* was filmed in and around Blue Grass, a small community in the county, and many residents, including local luminaries, appeared in it as extras. Today, some of the buildings shown in the film can still be seen by visitors to Blue Grass.⁶

Highland Today

Highland County today continues to maintain its rural character. With fewer than 2,400 residents, the county is the least populous Virginia county and one of the least populous counties east of the Mississippi River. Highland County's largest community and the county seat is the Town of Monterey which is home to roughly 150 people. Other settlements include Blue Grass, McDowell, and Headwaters.

Highland County's economy reflects the rural nature of the community. The local

economy depends on the utilization of natural resources, and agriculture remains an important economic driver in the county. Notably, the county's rich valleys provide ideal grazing land for sheep and cattle. Sheep, in particular, are typical in the area and the County consistently ranks as a top producer of sheep and sheep's wool in the Commonwealth. The vast forest resources in the county are utilized in industries like logging, milling, and maple product production.⁷

Despite the prevalence of agriculture in the community, it only employs a small portion of the county's workforce—just under five percent. The construction, manufacturing, and retail industries employ larger numbers of Highland residents—roughly nine percent, seven percent, and five percent respectively—though those jobs may be located outside of the county itself. By far, the dominant employment sector is government (primarily through county public schools), which accounts for roughly one-third of all jobs in the county. Despite its small size and relative isolation, the county boasts an unemployment rate only slightly higher than that of the rest of the Commonwealth – 3.7% in Highland County and 3.3% statewide. The median household income, however, lags behind the Commonwealth with the median household income in Highland County at approximately \$45,000 per year and the median statewide household income at roughly \$66,000 per year. Highland County's poverty rate is also higher than the state average with roughly thirteen percent of the population living below the poverty line in the county compared to eleven percent at the state level.⁸

Despite its small population and some of its economic challenges, the county also has a number of amenities that are utilized by locals and may be attractive

to visitors. Monterey, the county seat and the most populous settlement, has a picturesque downtown with restaurants, retail establishments, and the historic Highland Inn. Monterey is also home to the Highland Center and the Blanchard Gallery which feature the work of local artists. Outside of Monterey, the county is dotted with bed-and-breakfasts and cabins where visitors can stay overnight when exploring the county. Additionally, visitors can browse the general stores located throughout the county or visit one of the many maple syrup producers to learn about syrup production in Highland. Each year, the county draws thousands of visitors to the Highland County Fair and other local festivals which celebrate the culture of the area. Notably, the Maple Festival, which showcases the county's maple syrup products, brings in visitors from far and near to witness trees being tapped, to sample local maple syrup, and to purchase local arts and crafts. While access is limited in the county, intrepid outdoor lovers can also visit the Highland Wildlife Management Area or the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests to hike and interact with the county's stunning landscape on backcountry trails.⁹

Parks and Outdoor Recreation as an Economic Driver

There are two major arguments for a state park or other major outdoor recreation opportunity in Highland County. First, there is a clear need for improved access to nature-based recreation in the county. Second, a state park or other outdoor recreation has potential to significantly and positively impact the county's economy.

Highland County, one of the most bucolic areas in the Commonwealth, has surprisingly poor access to public outdoor recreation. Currently, the majority of Highland County residents cannot access a Virginia State Park within a sixty-minute

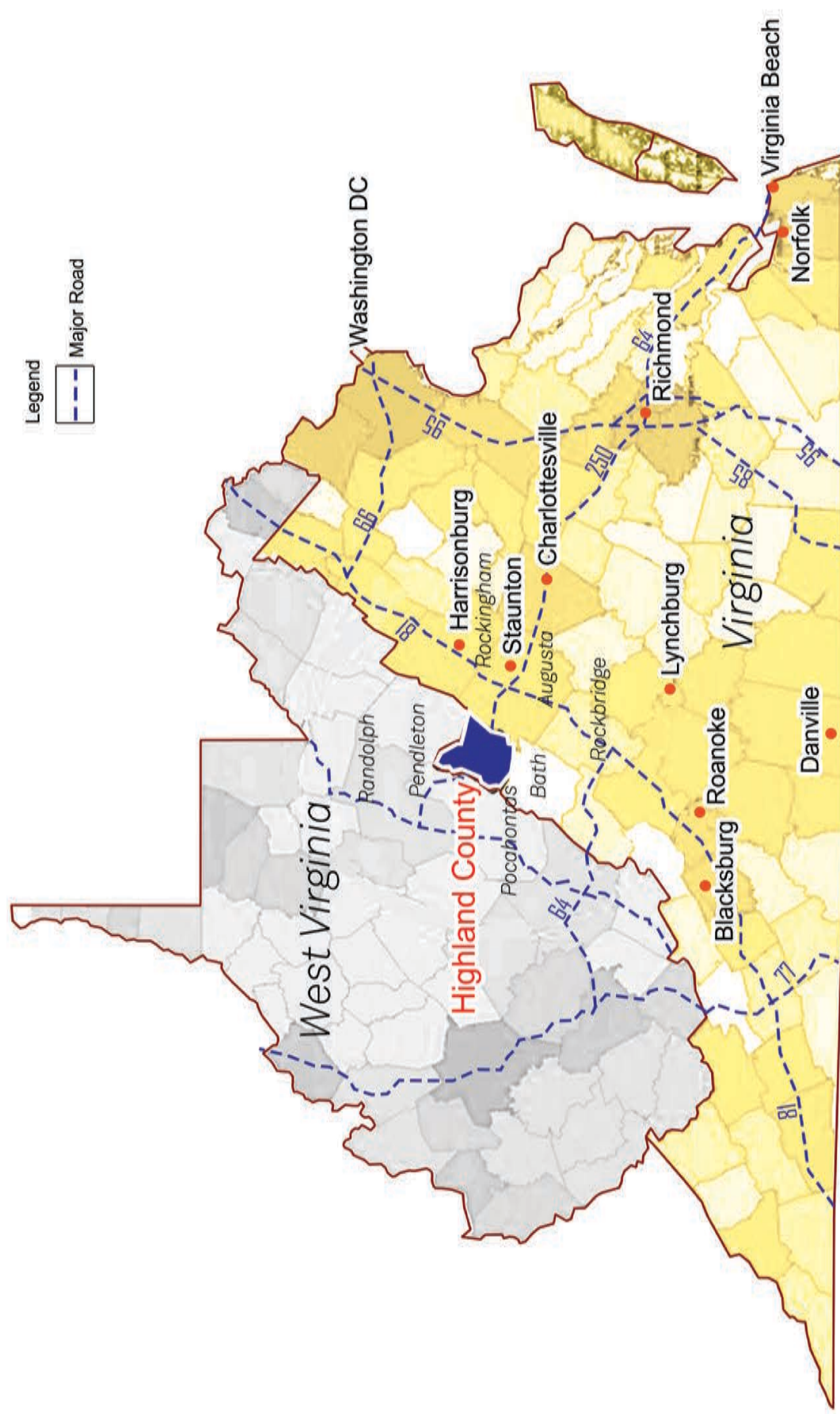


Fig. 5
Highland County is located in the uplands of western Virginia. The county is bypassed by Virginia's major interstates, which makes for lengthy travel times into and out of the county.

driving radius of their homes and there is limited access to national forests, national parks, and local level parks. The county also has a limited revenue stream. The county's budget is comprised almost entirely of distributions from the General Assembly and from local property taxes. By investing in a state park or other major outdoor recreation destination, Highland County will improve not only its public access to nature, but will stimulate economic activity.¹⁰

Travel and tourism are major economic drivers for Virginia. In 2016, the Virginia Tourism Corporation ("VTC") estimated Highland County saw \$525,466 generated in local tax receipts from economic activity related to travel. VTC also estimated that travel spending supported 182 jobs in the locality. These estimates were made in the absence of a state park; the addition of a state park or other outdoor recreation in the county would add significantly to existing benefits from travel and tourism. For example, nearby Bath County sees an average \$8,400,000 in economic activity generated by Douthat State Park alone. Employment opportunities influenced by state parks range from those associated with construction and build out phases, as well as on-site interpreters and rangers. Such opportunities grow over time as the park becomes more developed and more popular with visitors.¹¹

In Virginia, economic activity driven by state parks is estimated to have contributed \$304,600,000 to the overall state economy in 2017, with a significant multi-million dollar impact made by spending from non-locals. Money spent by park visitors contributes to and supports the park system, but is also spent on local food and beverages, local crafts, lodging, and retail. More importantly, because the overwhelming majority of visitors to Virginia State Parks are day users, they spend more on park related expenses

in total than overnight and non-resident visitors. With a lack of parks in the region surrounding Highland County, there appears to be untapped economic potential for the locality.¹²

It is important to note that Highland County is not wholly without access to public land or outdoor recreation. The county is home to one of the largest wildlife management areas ("WMAs") in the Commonwealth. The Highland WMA, operated by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, is used by resident and non-resident hunters. Public use of the WMA is limited, however. A permit is required for entrance and the number of allowable uses has decreased in recent years. Notably camping and swimming are no longer permitted as they are considered to be disruptive to DGIF's mission of wildlife management. There are opportunities for hiking in the WMA, but as the trails are almost entirely backcountry, they are inaccessible to inexperienced hikers. A system of established trails and camping opportunities—such as those provided in state parks—would attract visitors from within and outside of the county.¹³

Parks are not without economic drawbacks. The process for designation by the State is lengthy and in recent years has been prolonged by budgetary setbacks. This trend is not unique to Virginia; across the country state park operating expenses have increased. It is estimated that between 1978 and 2007, these expenses increased by approximately \$1 billion. Despite this increase in operational cost, parks' local economic, health, and social benefits balance the capital costs of investment and development.¹⁴

End Notes

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Precedent Analysis

In order to assess the feasibility of a state park in Highland County, our team closely examined the current network of existing Virginia State Parks and explored a number of factors to determine the overall context of the current system. These factors included: county size and location, county population, park attendance and visitation trends, site acreage, park amenities, and programmatic themes. Our team studied four existing Virginia State Parks that have similar features to Highland County to assess their successes and failures in order to determine what makes for a successful state park.

The Model of a Successful Park: Douthat State Park

Douthat State Park is one of the most popular state parks in Virginia. Douthat State Park is located in Bath County, Virginia—the second least populous county in the Commonwealth. Although Bath County is sparsely populated, with approximately 4,700 residents, Douthat State Park has relatively high visitation rate when compared to other parks in the State and is one of the most visited parks in the western Virginia region. With nearly 5,000 acres of land, Douthat has various outdoor recreation opportunities including a fifty-acre lake, forty-five miles of hiking trails, mountain biking, and many interpretive educational programming events. In addition, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in the development of traditional family parks nationwide.

One measure of Douthat's success is its impact on the local economy and the total amount of visitor spending. Of all of the Virginia State Parks, Douthat had the third largest impact on the local economy which is particularly significant because of its size and location. Part of Douthat's success can



Douthat State Park. Photo Credit: Bill Crabtree Jr. Flickr.



Douthat Beach Complex. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks. Flickr.



Tuscarora Overlook, Douthat State Park. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks Flickr.

be attributed to the role of overnight guests. Out-of-town, overnight guests have the highest per visit spending of all park visitors. Douthat has thirty-two cabins, three lodges, and many camping amenities for both tent and RV camping.

Douthat is a particularly positive example of a Virginia State Park and highlights the potential positive effect a state park may have in Highland County. Bath County is the second least populous county in Virginia, yet the economic impact that the state park brings to the region is substantial. Often in the summer months, Douthat reaches capacity and cannot accommodate all potential visitors. Because Highland County is located nearby and has similar ecological beauty, a state park in Highland County could potentially alleviate the capacity issues at Douthat and bring additional state park users to western Virginia. Further research is necessary to determine which particular amenities Douthat possesses that make it such a successful destination. Additionally, an inventory of the amenities that Douthat lacks can also shed light on programming gaps that could be filled by a park in Highland County. Noting the characteristics that pull people to Douthat and Bath County may shed light on the amenities that could be incorporated into a state park in Highland County.

Parks with Similar Qualities to a Future Highland State Park

Douthat State Park is an exceptionally well performing state park and exemplifies a successful park in the broadest sense. Keeping in mind Highland's geographic location, population, geological features, and possible programming opportunities, our team examined three additional Virginia State Parks, some successful and others less so, that share similar specific features as a potential park in Highland County. The three parks that are discussed below are Bear Creek Lake in central Virginia, Chippokes

Plantation near the Hampton Roads, and Staunton River in southern Virginia.

Geographic Isolation and Small Population: Bear Creek Lake

Bear Creek Lake State Park is located in rural and sparsely populated Cumberland County. Cumberland County has a population nearly five times larger than that of Highland County. Though its population of 10,000 is significantly larger than the population of Highland County, it is still considered small when compared with other localities in the Commonwealth. In 2013, Bear Creek Lake brought \$3,722,112 into the local economy. Bear Creek Lake attracts roughly 78,000 visitors with more than half being overnight guests. Considering that overnight guests have the most significant per visit impact on the local economy, attracting overnight guests is important to maintaining a successful state park.¹

Because Douthat State Park performs exceptionally well, Bear Creek Lake's attendance numbers and impact on the local economy may seem lackluster. However, because Cumberland County is one of the counties with a state park in Virginia that is most similar in geography and demographics to Highland County, Bear Creek Lake provides an example of a moderately performing park and more realistically depicts how a state park in Highland County may perform.²

Agricultural Demonstration and History: Chippokes Plantation

Chippokes Plantation acts as a precedent for a working farm as a state park in Virginia. Located near the Hampton Roads, the park includes the original Chippokes Plantation, which is an active agricultural operation settled in the seventeenth century. Chippokes Plantation State Park is not a typical state park in that it consists of twenty historically significant buildings and



Bear Creek Lake. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



Shawnee the Shepherd at handicap hiking, Bear Creek Lake. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



Canoes and kayaks, Bear Creek Lake. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



River at Chippokes Plantation State Park. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



Jones Stewart Mansion, Chippokes Plantation. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



Second oldest slave quarters still extant in Virginia, Chippokes Plantation. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.

structures and provides programming that interprets Virginia's history and agricultural heritage, in addition to more typical natural history and outdoor recreational activities.

The Chippokes property was acquired by the Commonwealth in 1967 when the last owner willed the plantation to the state to be maintained permanently as a museum of Virginia's agricultural history. The property was donated with the intent to "preserve and interpret the cultural landscape which represents over four centuries of rural life along the James River."³ The park's mission is to combine recreational opportunities for families with the historic and natural resources of the property. Chippokes Plantation opened to the public in 1970 and by the late 1990s, the park was complete with a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities including a swimming pool, hiking and biking trails, and picnic facilities. In addition, there is the Chippokes Farm and Forestry Museum which interprets many antique farming tools and equipment. Over the past decade, the park has focused its efforts on connecting the site to the many nearby attractions including historic areas of Williamsburg and Jamestown, various conservation areas, the James River and other water resources, and scenic roads throughout Surry County.

Chippokes Plantation has faced additional challenges including "ongoing issues with shoreline erosion" and challenges that pertain to preserving the historic character of the site while adhering to modern necessities including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, visibility of utility wires, and construction of parking lots and trails.

According to the 2011 Chippokes Plantation Master Plan, visitation to the park is not steady and varies significantly from year to year. Chippokes Plantation is located in

Surry County, which has a population of about 7,000. Unlike Douthat and Bear Creek Lake State Parks, which are also located in low-population areas, Chippokes Plantation fails to draw in a comparable number of visitors. This could be due to a multitude of factors including the park's location in the state, the type of activities offered at Chippokes and other state parks, the park's agricultural theme, and its proximity to other points of interest in the county and region. More research is needed to determine the precise reasons for Chippokes Plantation's relatively low visitation numbers.⁴

Dark Skies: Staunton River State Park

Staunton River State Park was designated as an International Dark Sky Park in 2015. The park, located in Halifax County in southern Virginia, is near the North Carolina border. One of the reasons for Staunton River's success as a dark-sky park is the wide fields and low horizons, which make for a good viewing at night. The park has introduced specific dark-sky lighting policies that further enhance the viewing of the night sky. In order to encourage citizen involvement, the park partners with the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill to provide telescope use, parties, and educational programming. Stargazers already visit Highland County to view the night sky. Designation as a dark-sky park may expand programming options for a potential state park in the county because of its relative isolation, a lack of light pollution, and the potential to draw in additional overnight visitors who would like a dedicated space in the county in which to stargaze.⁵



End Notes

1. "Master Plan Executive Summary: Bear Creek Lake" (Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, 2013), <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/document/mp4bcexecsum.pdf>.
2. "Master Plan Executive Summary: Bear Creek Lake."
3. "Master Plan Executive Summary: Chippokes Plantation" (Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, December 1999), <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML0201/ML020160083.pdf>.
4. "Chippokes Plantation State Park: Master Plan Executive Summary" (Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, December 2011).
5. "Staunton River State Park Is Named International Dark Sky Park," n.d., <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/blog/staunton-river-state-park-is-named-international-dark-sky-park>.

Analyzing Potential Park Sites

In analyzing the potential for a state park in Highland County, the Friends of Highland County State Park initially compiled a list of possible sites in the county. They then scored the sites and presented Ascent Consulting Group with the top four sites—the Bullpasture River Gorge, Dividing Waters Farm, Hayfields Farm, and Jack Mountain Village—for further evaluation. All of these sites are unique and have varying combinations of existing infrastructure, potential for park development, and natural assets.

This chapter will first explore each of the sites, will discuss each site's assets, and will address features that may present challenges should a site be designated a state park. This is followed by an explanation of our team's process for assessing access to and the need for recreational opportunities in the county, including a discussion of the surveys our team distributed to Highland County residents and visitors to the Maple Festival. The chapter concludes with a description of our assessment of the economic impact a state park will have in the county and our system for evaluating each of the potential park sites.

IMPORTANT DCR PARK CRITERIA

- 🌿 Farming/agricultural demonstration
- 🌿 Usable/existing structures/infrastructure
- 🌿 Proximity to commercial, medical, supplies
- 🌿 Potential for trail development (hiking, horse, mountain biking, ATV)
- 🌿 Potential for recreation activity development (rappelling, ropes courses, zip line, rock climbing, caving)
- 🌿 Adjacent to public land (national forests, wildlife management areas)
- 🌿 Available, affordable, 600 acres minimum
- 🌿 Topography (difference in elevations, woodlands, rock outcrops)
- 🌿 Recreational water features (fishing, kayaking, swimming)
- 🌿 Income producing

Fig. 6: Department of Conservation and Recreation Criteria

Bullpasture Gorge

Part of the Highland Wildlife Management Area operated by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Bullpasture Gorge site is one thousand acres of mountainous woodland. The area has long been a spot in which locals could camp, fish, hike, hunt, and swim. However, changes in permissible uses in 2010 restricted use to fishing, day hiking, and hunting.¹

The topography of the area, access to the river, existing trail areas, and opportunities for wildlife observation make the Bullpasture Gorge an ideal potential site for a state park. The full area surrounding the Bullpasture Gorge covers several thousand acres, which is significantly larger than the preferred 600-acre minimum used in the Department of Conservation and Recreation eligibility criteria. Given the costs associated with managing such a large expanse, it is recommended that any potential state park at the Bullpasture Gorge site be constrained to only a portion of the WMA.

Out of all of the potential sites, the Bullpasture Gorge best lends itself to developing traditional Virginia State Park programming. It is already used for outdoor recreation and is known outside the region for its hunting and wilderness. The Bullpasture Gorge ranks high as a potential state park site.

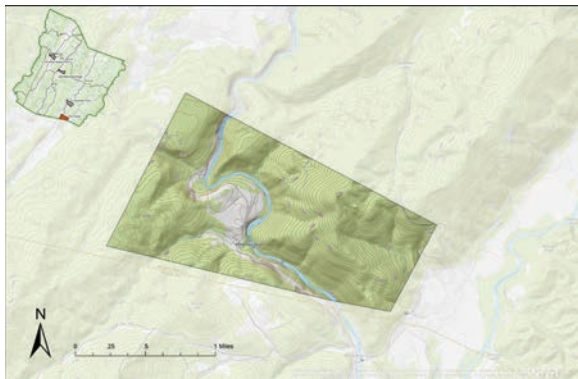


Fig. 7: Bullpasture Gorge



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Average Score: 74.1

Ranking Score: 10



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Dividing Waters Farm

First settled in 1790, the Dividing Waters Farm is an iconic property in Highland County. The farm has often been depicted in national media as an example of the beauty of rural Virginia. The farm, which has been in the same family's possession since settlement, sits on approximately 875 acres five miles west of Monterey in the Blue Grass Valley. The property received its name because it lies on the watershed divide line that separates the Potomac River watershed from the James River watershed. The property is a working farm with fields that are currently used as pasture for sheep and cattle and contains multiple sugar bushes that contribute to maple syrup production. Additionally, the site's location provides picturesque views of the surrounding mountains and access to wildlife, including deer, wild turkey, and mountain trout.

The site boasts significant built assets. Included with the property are a fifteen-room manor house, a wash house, a two-car garage, a garden house, a smoke house, a wood house, and a cellar. Additionally, a farm manager's house, a two-unit apartment building, and an old-fashioned general store take advantage of the site's location at the intersection of U.S. Route 250 and Virginia State Route 640. In fact, the general store long acted as a community gathering place during the first half of the twentieth century. Multiple agricultural buildings—horse barn, dairy barn, equipment shed, hay barn, and chicken house—also exist on the site.

The property's location in the county and its proximity to a major thoroughfare make it well suited for visitors to Highland. Additionally, the historic, cultural, and agricultural assets of the site would lend Dividing Waters to various types of educational programming that are unique within the Virginia State Parks system.

Further, the existing structures may reduce the costs associated with early building on a less developed site. Finally, the property is available for acquisition as the most recent owner's estate is seeking to sell the property.

While the site has many assets, there are significant barriers that may make the site less well suited for use as a potential state park. Most notably is the cost of acquisition. Currently, the property is listed for a total price of \$3,250,000 and, if the site were purchased for use as a state park, it would likely deprive the county of roughly \$14,000 per year in local property tax revenue—both significant financial hurdles. The topography of the site may also present a challenge for development for two reasons. First, the site is bisected by U.S. Route 250 and creating programming that integrates to the two sections while minimizing the danger of crossing a relatively high-traffic roadway may be difficult. Second, the site's location in a valley makes traditional recreational uses that rely on topographic variation less feasible than at other sites that are characterized by access to hills and mountains.²

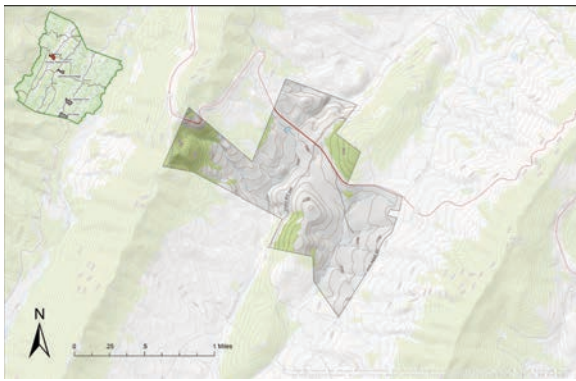


Fig. 8: Dividing Waters I



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Average Score: 54.3

Ranking Score: 20



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Hayfields Farm

Hayfields Farm is located ten miles south of McDowell on Bullpasture River Road. The site is the most accessible for visitors coming from the eastern and southern parts of the state via U.S. Route 250. However, it is also the farthest from Monterey and the commercial activity centered there. The total acreage of the property is approximately 1,100 acres. The Hayfields Farm site is located on the scenic Bullpasture River, which flows south from the property to the Bullpasture Gorge site. The site has numerous wetland features and rolling hills. Portions of the site have a high forest conservation value and abut the DGIF's Highland Wildlife Management Area. In addition to natural features, the site has numerous historic assets, including an historic, nineteenth century farm house and its outbuildings.

The way in which Hayfields came to be considered a potential site for a state park is closely related to the current events surrounding the Atlantic Coast Pipeline in Highland County. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline is intended to stretch from West Virginia to South Carolina and its proposed path runs through parts of the county. In order to construct the pipeline, Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC is acquiring easements that give it the right to locate the pipeline on private land, a right that they are granted under the Natural Gas Act.

Controversially, the proposed pipeline goes through sixty-eight acres of land in Virginia that is under conservation easement—a legal tool intended to protect lands from development. However, under the Section 1704 process, conservation easements on a particular property can be transferred to another location when the substituted property is of greater conservation value. By utilizing the Section 1704 process,

previously protected lands can then be developed.

In this case, the pipeline's path is expected to cross property in Bath County that was held under conservation easement by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. In order to access that property, The Conservation Fund (a mitigation consultant for Dominion) purchased Hayfields Farm on behalf of Dominion. It then completed a Section 1704 application to transfer the conservation easements to the Hayfields Farm property. Dominion then deeded all of its ownership interests to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation for Hayfields Farm to be protected open space. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation was also given significant funds to maintain and operate the property. Hayfields Farm is now owned and operated by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation which has been under scrutiny for its cooperation with Atlantic Coast Pipeline and Dominion in transferring easements that were assumed to provide permanent conservation protection.

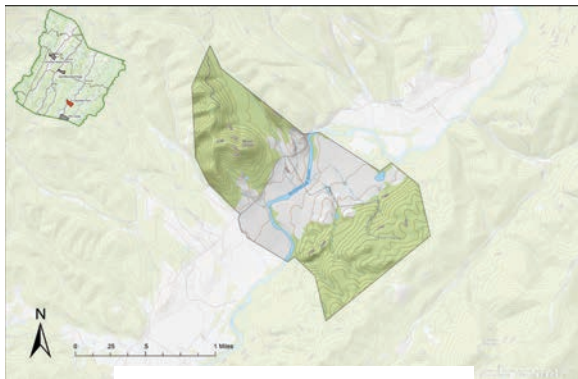


Fig. 8: Hayfields F:



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Average Score: 73.5

Ranking Score: 8



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Jack Mountain Village

Jack Mountain Village is the smallest of the proposed sites at only 586 acres. Located roughly three miles from Monterey along U.S. Route 220, the site had been the location of employee housing for the Bath County Pump Storage Project. As a result, the site has existing infrastructure including gravel roads, grading, and structures.

The site also abuts the Highland Wildlife Management Area. Currently, the site is used by locals in various ways including as a launch site for small rockets and as a workshop.

Jack Mountain Village's topography and proximity to the WMA make it ideally suited for camping, RVing, and hiking. Notably, the graded portion of the parcel nearest the highway lends itself to RV camping or to cabin construction. The gravel roads leading toward the WMA would provide access to hikers or tent campers who seek a less developed park experience. There is also a small pond on the site that could be converted into a recreational feature. The existence of some basic infrastructure may also decrease the cost of developing a state park on the site. The site's location near Monterey may make it more attractive to visitors who like to visit surrounding communities when they visit state parks and may make programming partnerships with the local school or other organizations more palatable.

There are significant challenges to development of a state park at the Jack Mountain Village site, however. Notably, the site is currently privately owned and it is unclear whether the site is available for acquisition. Additionally, utilizing the property as a state park could remove roughly \$4,000 per year from the local tax rolls. The site also fails to meet the Department of Conservation and Recreation's minimum size guidelines.

Because DCR will not develop more than twenty percent of the land in a state park, the small size of Jack Mountain Village limits the amount of development that could occur at the site.



Fig. 10: Jack Moun



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Average Score: 64.3

Ranking Score: 13



Photo Credit: Zach Waldmeier

Assessing Needs and Access: GIS Mapping

The feasibility study included a comprehensive analysis of Highland County using geographic information system (“GIS”) technology. Mapping existing geographic conditions and outdoor recreation infrastructure deepened understanding of each site’s features and revealed how a state park in Highland County can enhance the area’s existing recreation and tourism network. This approach included mapping analyses of county watersheds, county elevation and slope, distribution of karst within the county, location and accessibility of existing outdoor recreation, location of and connectivity with existing tourist attractions in Highland County, and potential travel routes to the recommended park site.

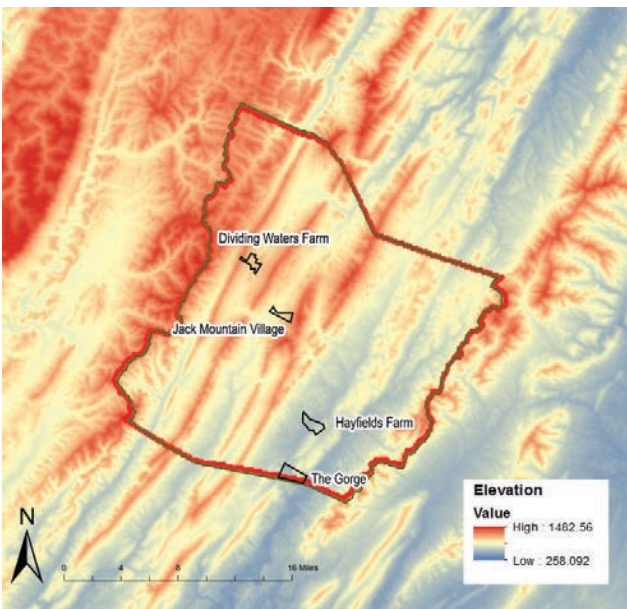


Fig. 11: GIS Elevation Analysis

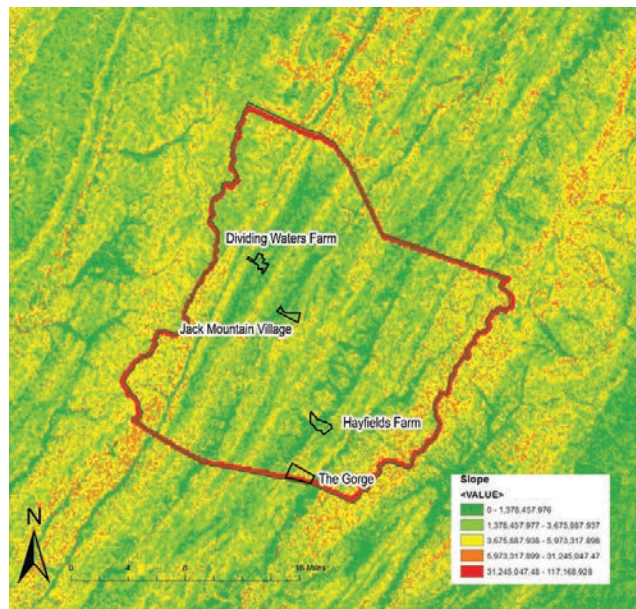


Fig. 12: GIS Slope Analysis

Geographic Features

The Department of Conservation and Recreation looks to satisfy these major criteria when designating a state park: water access, potential to satisfy high-demand programming, and the potential for development. As such, hydrology, elevation, and karst were analyzed using GIS to assess the feasibility of each potential site.

Of the four sites, only two have large above-ground water features. The Bullpasture River flows through both Hayfields Farm and the Bullpasture Gorge. These two sites are also sited downhill within a major water shed. This presents runoff and storm water management concerns relative to park development. While Dividing Waters Farm and Jack Mountain Village have some water elements (the former includes the headwaters to both the James and Potomac Rivers and the latter contains a series of small beaver dams), they are not navigable.

The elevation analysis was primarily intended to determine the potential for hiking and general accessibility within the park. Dividing Waters Farm, Hayfields Farm, and the Bullpasture Gorge are all at low, relatively flat elevations that include slight slopes. These sites are conducive, then, for horse paths and long, meandering hiking trails. Their relatively low grades make them accessible to those with limited mobility. Jack Mountain Village is both at a high elevation which includes changes to the portion of the property that abuts the Wildlife Management Area which are suitable for trail development. The Bullpasture Gorge has similar changes in elevation and slope in some areas of the defined potential park boundary that make the site suitable for trail development.

As forty percent of Highland County is underlain by karst or potential karst and given that DCR only develops twenty percent of the acreage within a state park

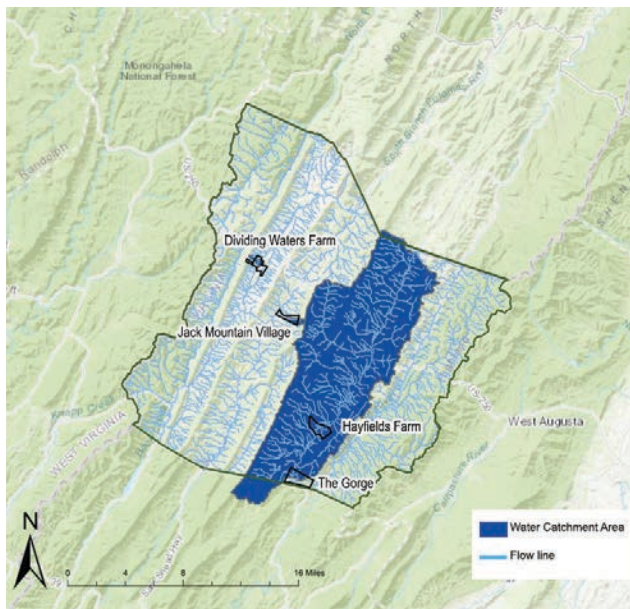


Fig. 13: GIS Hydrology Analysis

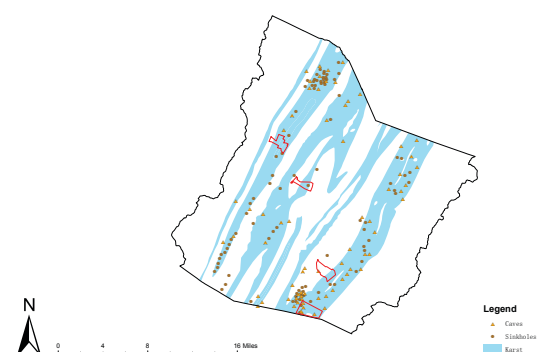


Fig. 14: GIS Karst Distribution Analysis

site, an analysis of the karst distribution in the potential park sites became a necessary component of this study. Karst, often found in landscapes with limestone or dolostone bedrock, is characterized by sinkholes, sunken streams, caves, and large flow springs. While it is possible to develop in areas with karst, karst is vulnerable to pollution, especially groundwater contamination, and may cause subsidence in structures. Additionally, sensitive and rare species inhabit karst landscapes, which may be disturbed or harmed by development.³

Each of the four potential sites contains some element of karst. The Bullpasture Gorge and Dividing Waters Farm have the highest percentage of karst, while Jack Mountain Village and Hayfields Farm have lower percentages of karst. While a high level of karst may present unique opportunities for recreational caving, the lower levels within Hayfields Farm and Jack Mountain Village make those sites more

attractive for park development.

Existing Recreation and Tourism Opportunities

The interest in and proposal for a state park in Highland County has been, in part, driven by the overall lack of access to Virginia State Parks. A major mission for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation is to facilitate access to and enjoyment of public lands. DCR has committed to establishing state parks within sixty-miles of every Virginia resident to accomplish this objective. By DCR's standard, the majority of Highland County is underserved by the existing state park system: only one Virginia State Park falls within a sixty-minute drive of Highland County. Eight West Virginia parks, two National Forests, and one Wildlife Management Area are technically accessible to county residents, but have inconvenient points of access and limited recreational opportunities in practice.

Visualizing the current locations of existing

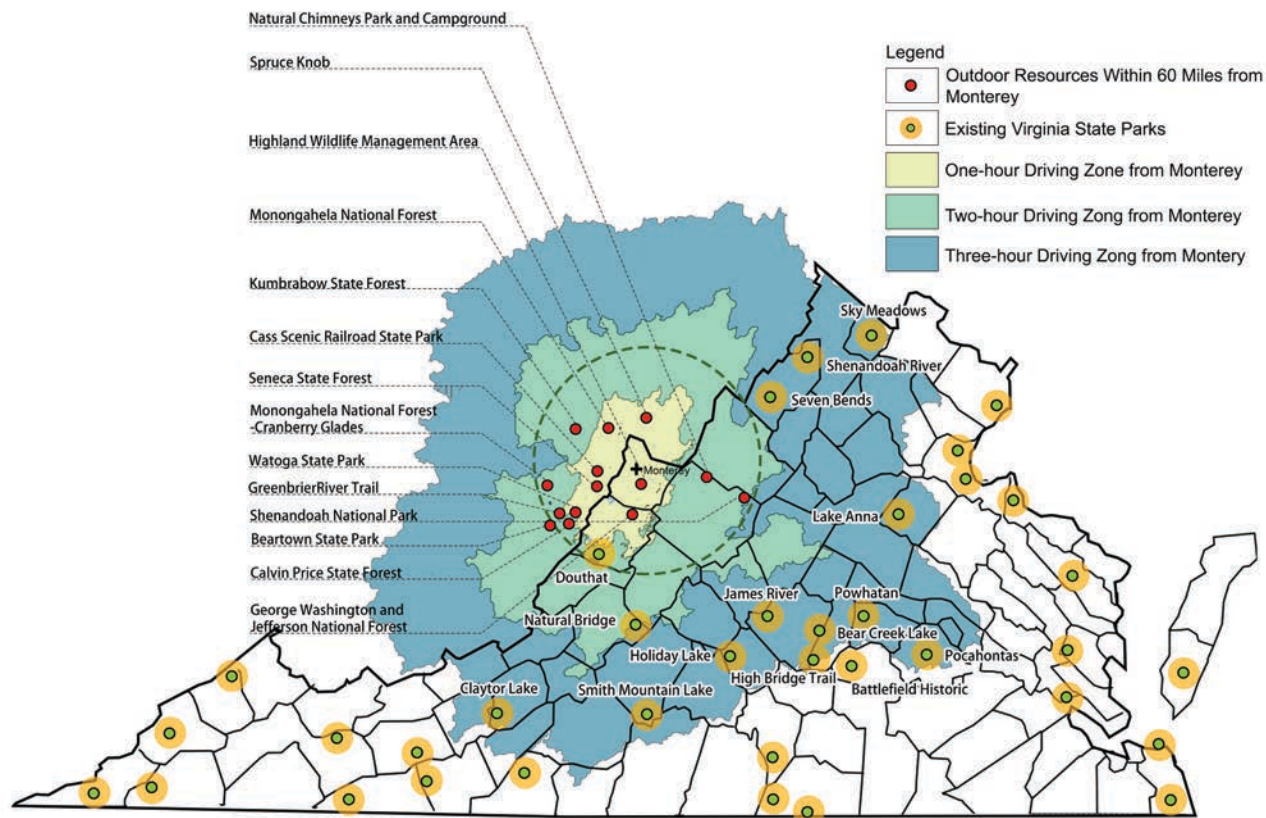


Fig. 15: Driving duration to existing outdoor resources, including Virginia State Parks.

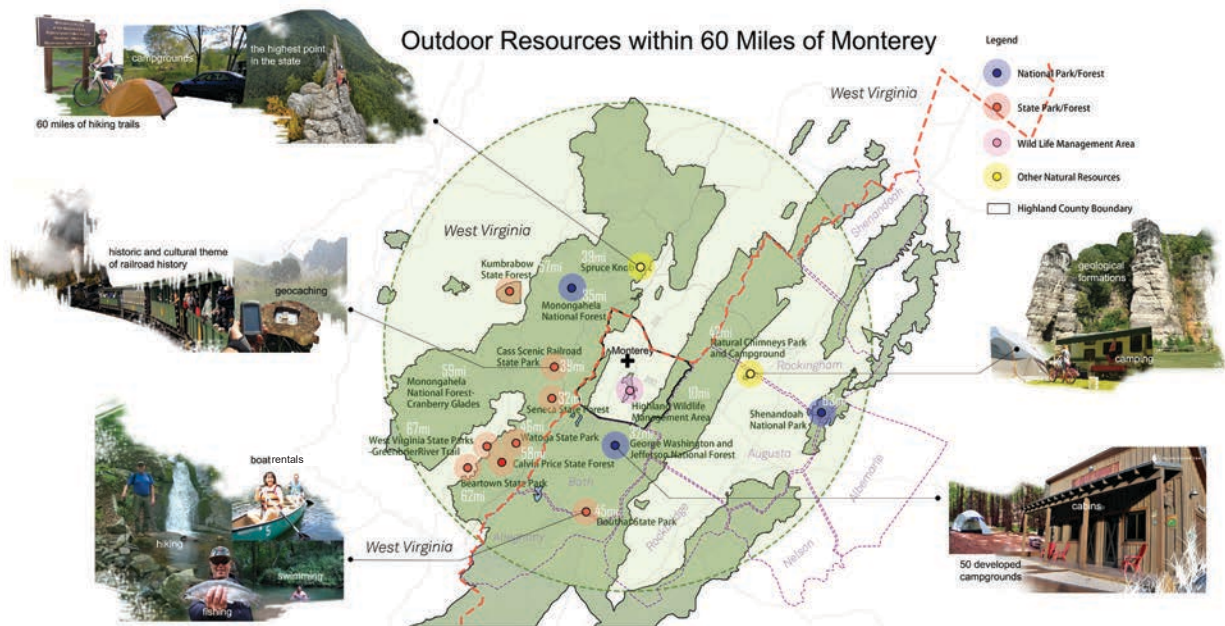


Fig. 16: Existing outdoor resources within sixty miles of Monterey.

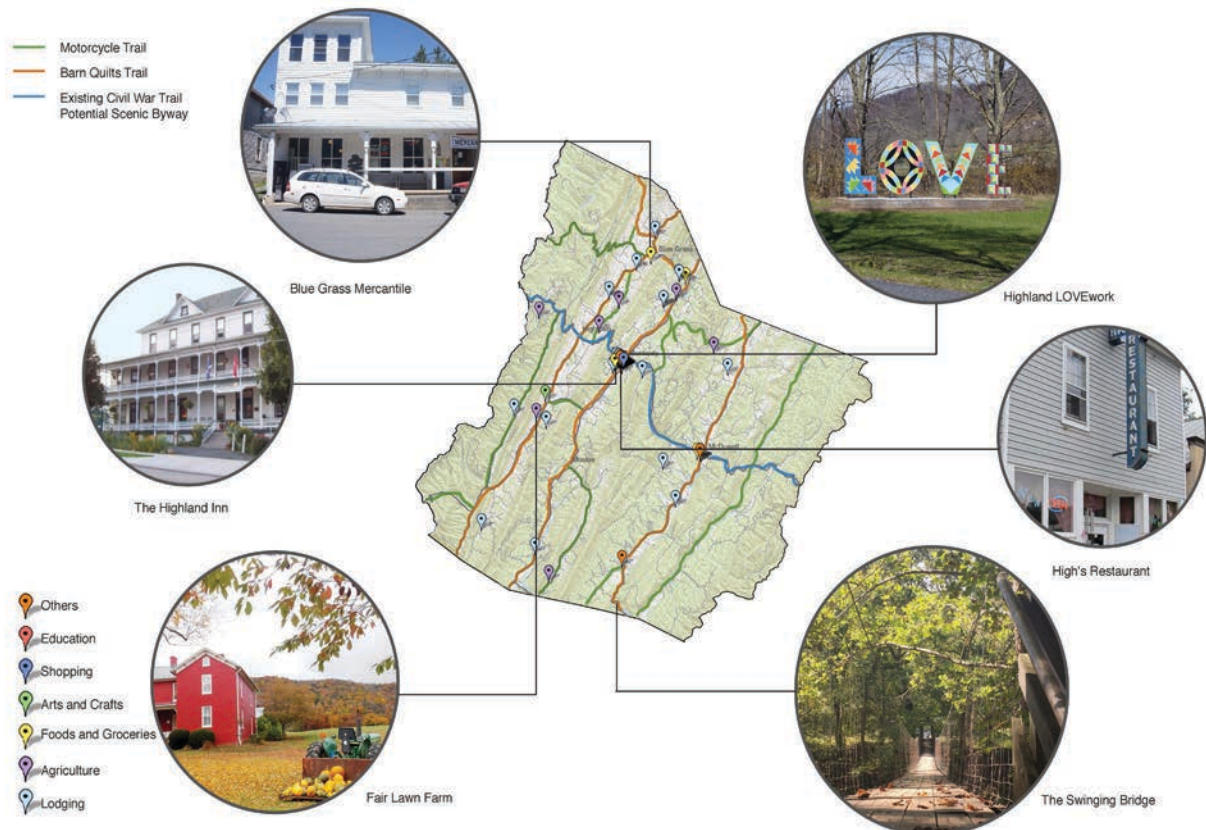


Fig. 17: Existing tourism sites within Highland County.

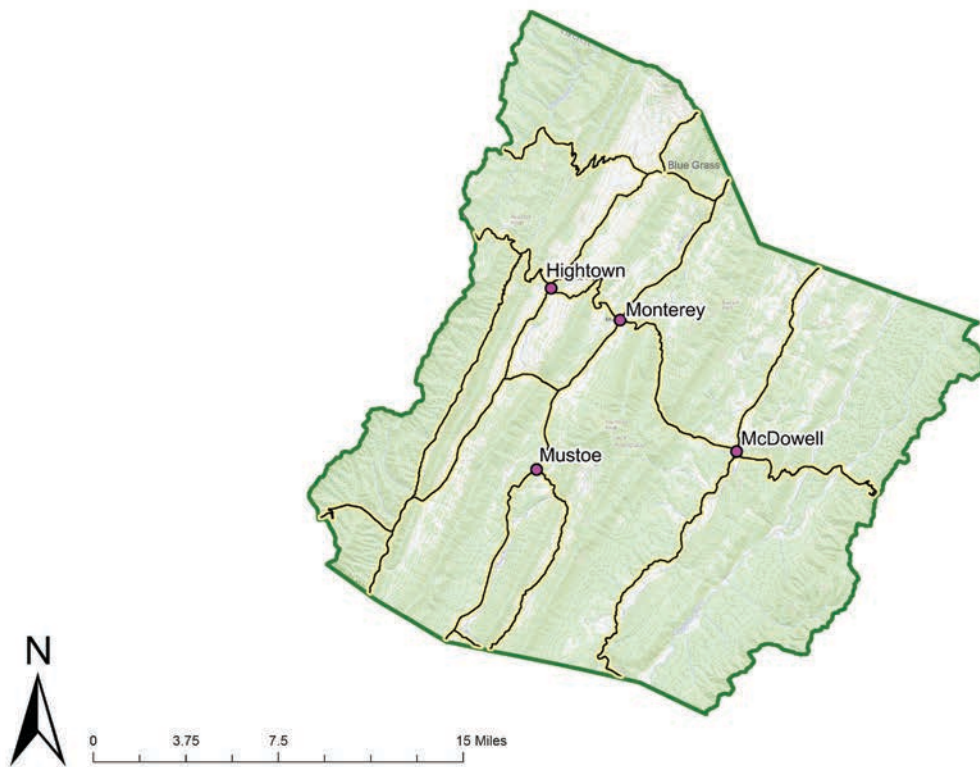


Fig. 18: Major roads and settlements in Highland County

Virginia State Parks is crucial evidence in demonstrating the county's limited access to state parks. Using data from the ESRI ArcGIS online suite, one-hour, two-hour, and three-hour drive sheds were mapped with Monterey as the epicenter. Sixty-minute increments were used as they correspond with DCR's general guidelines for park access. These identified drive times were then layered with existing Virginia State Parks, West Virginia State Parks, and other outdoor recreation. This map shows that Highland has limited access to Virginia State Parks, as well as limited access to other outdoor recreation.

Additional mapping was done to show the location and connection between existing tourist attractions in Highland County (Fig. 17). Because the potential for a positive economic impact in the county is central to the argument in favor of locating a state park in Highland County, our team's GIS analysis shows how a park can connect to existing destinations within the county and potentially lay the groundwork for future advertising. A mix of historical and cultural sites, retail opportunities, and existing suggested driving routes were included in the analysis.

Taken together, these analyses clearly demonstrate that a state park will satisfy county access to outdoor recreation, showcase a landscape that is currently missing from the Virginia State Park inventory, and enhance existing tourism opportunities in the county.

Alternative Travel Routes

One concern that has been expressed by community members to the Friends of Highland County State Park is that locating a state park in the county may cause a potential adverse traffic impact. As existing traffic data was insufficient to conduct a traffic impact analysis, an alternative routes

analysis was conducted to demonstrate how visitation to a state park can be distributed across multiple paths. This mapping includes primary, secondary, and tertiary roads that connect visitors from outside of Highland County to the potential park site at Hayfields Farm.

While this analysis shows that multiple routes exist, it is likely that those unfamiliar with Highland County or who rely on navigation systems will remain on primary routes. The overall impact on traffic will be proportionate to the popularity of the park and will be closely linked to the time of year. Further, it is anticipated that during development and the early years of the park visitation will be relatively low. It seems likely that overall the traffic impact of a state park will be minimal, though it is important to acknowledge public perception of changes in road use. Any future real or perceived impacts on traffic can be reviewed by a traffic count study or other such measure.

Assessing Needs and Access: Community Survey

Mapping existing parks and outdoor recreational accessibility reveals a major need for a state park or other access to outdoor recreation in Highland County. To substantiate this claim, two surveys were distributed in Spring 2018 to assess current outdoor recreation patterns in Highland County, Virginia State Park usage by respondents, interest in a potential state park being located in Highland County, and desired programming in a future state park. Additionally, because parks and outdoor recreation can be major economic drivers, the survey also asked how visiting state parks affected purchasing behaviors and if, when visiting a state park, participants also visited surrounding communities.

One survey was written for non-residents of Highland County to incorporate visitor

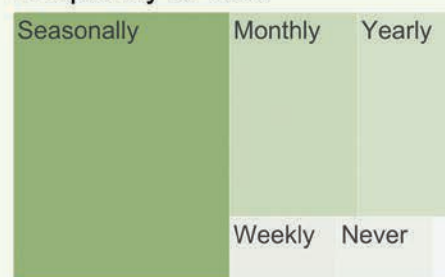
97% would visit a State Park in Highland County

People

93% People visit VA State Parks

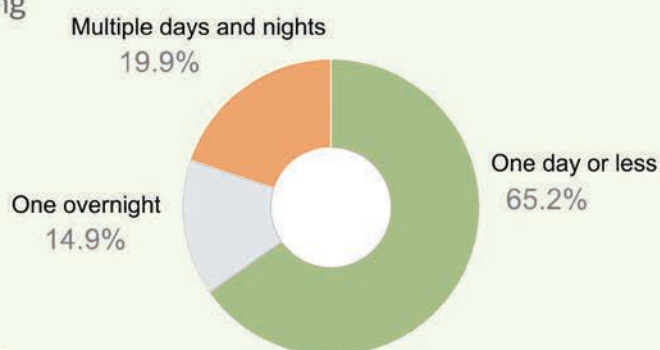


Frequency of Visit

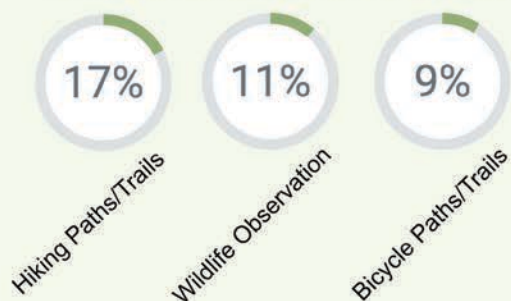


88% People visit surrounding communities

Length of Visit to State Park



Amenities/Activities at a HC Park



Does Visit Influence Purchases

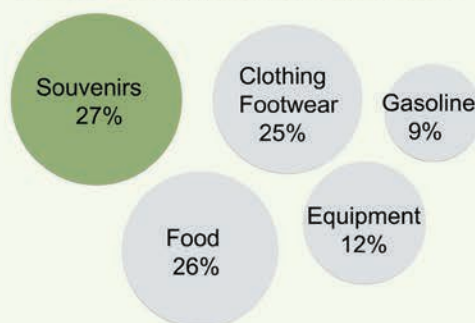


Fig. 19: Major non-resident survey responses.

94%
People would visit
a State Park
in Highland County

85% People
visit VA State Parks

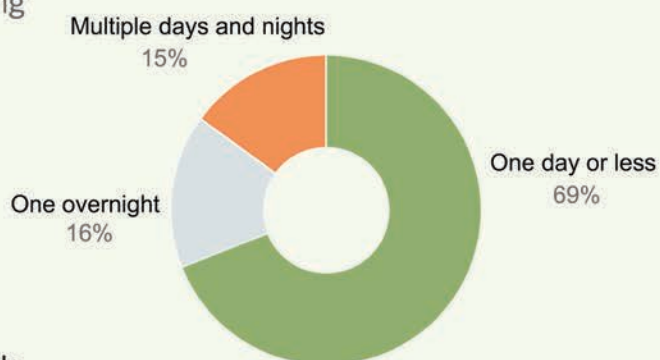


Frequency of Visit



86% People
visit surrounding
communities

Length of Visit to State Park



Amenities/Activities at a HC Park



Does Visit Influence Purchases

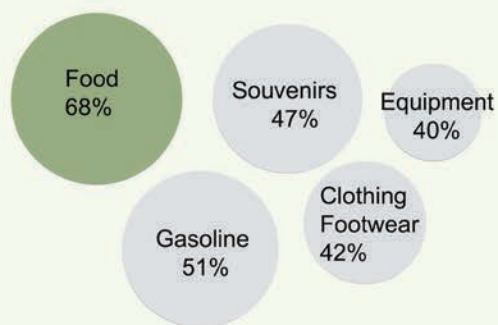


Fig. 20: Major resident survey responses.

feedback and another was written for residents of Highland County. The non-resident survey was distributed in-person during the annual Maple Festival in March 2018, while the resident survey was distributed twice—once during the Maple Festival and again online in April 2018. 152 responses were collected from non-residents; 199 responses were collected from residents. See Appendix A for the full survey and complete survey results.

Overwhelmingly, participants from both categories indicated they would attend a state park in Highland County, and written comments generally expressed interest and support for a state park in the county. Seventy-nine percent of non-resident participants and eighty-five percent of resident participants indicated they visit surrounding communities when visiting state parks. Additionally, a majority of participants responded that visits to state parks influenced their purchases, especially spending in restaurants, on local arts and crafts, and souvenirs. Combined, these responses provide evidence that visitors to a state park in Highland County are likely to not only visit other places in the county, but are also likely to spend money during their visit.

Participants were also asked about the activities they engage in most at state parks. Unsurprisingly, the most popular activities were hiking, camping, scenic drives or vistas, and wildlife observation. These categories were also the top responses when participants were asked what programming they would like to see in a state park in Highland County.

The results of these surveys were used to create site evaluation criteria and to guide our final recommendations. Specifically, the potential to develop the five top rated activities were incorporated into a site

evaluation scorecard and were used to establish where gaps currently exist in access to the most popular activities.

Assessing Feasibility: Economic Impact Assessment

An economic impact assessment of a state park in Highland County was conducted to determine whether designation of a state park in the county would impact the county's economy positively, negatively, or not at all. To conduct the assessment, our team utilized a modified money generating model ("MGM"). This model, which is used heavily by the National Parks Service as an estimation of economic impacts relative to their parks, estimates direct and total sales effects of visitor spending. It is a basic assessment model and relies on secondary data. Given the available level of detail in visitor spending and general visitation data published by DCR and its model's reasonable estimates, this model was chosen over other methods which require finer levels of data.⁴

The money generating model follows a straightforward worksheet which breaks down economic impacts into three major categories: sales benefits from tourism, tax revenue from tourism, and income and job benefits from tourism. Since the Virginia Tourism Corporation publishes travel economic impacts at the local level, these outcomes were used to complete the modified MGM. The VTC data was entered in the MGM worksheet in the categories of tax impacts of tourism and income and job benefits of tourism. Those published economic impacts are calculated using data not easily accessed and are considered reliable. The modified MGM was used to estimate the first category—sales benefits from tourism generated by a state park in Highland County.

Using the MGM method, a basic estimate

MONEY GENERATING MODEL

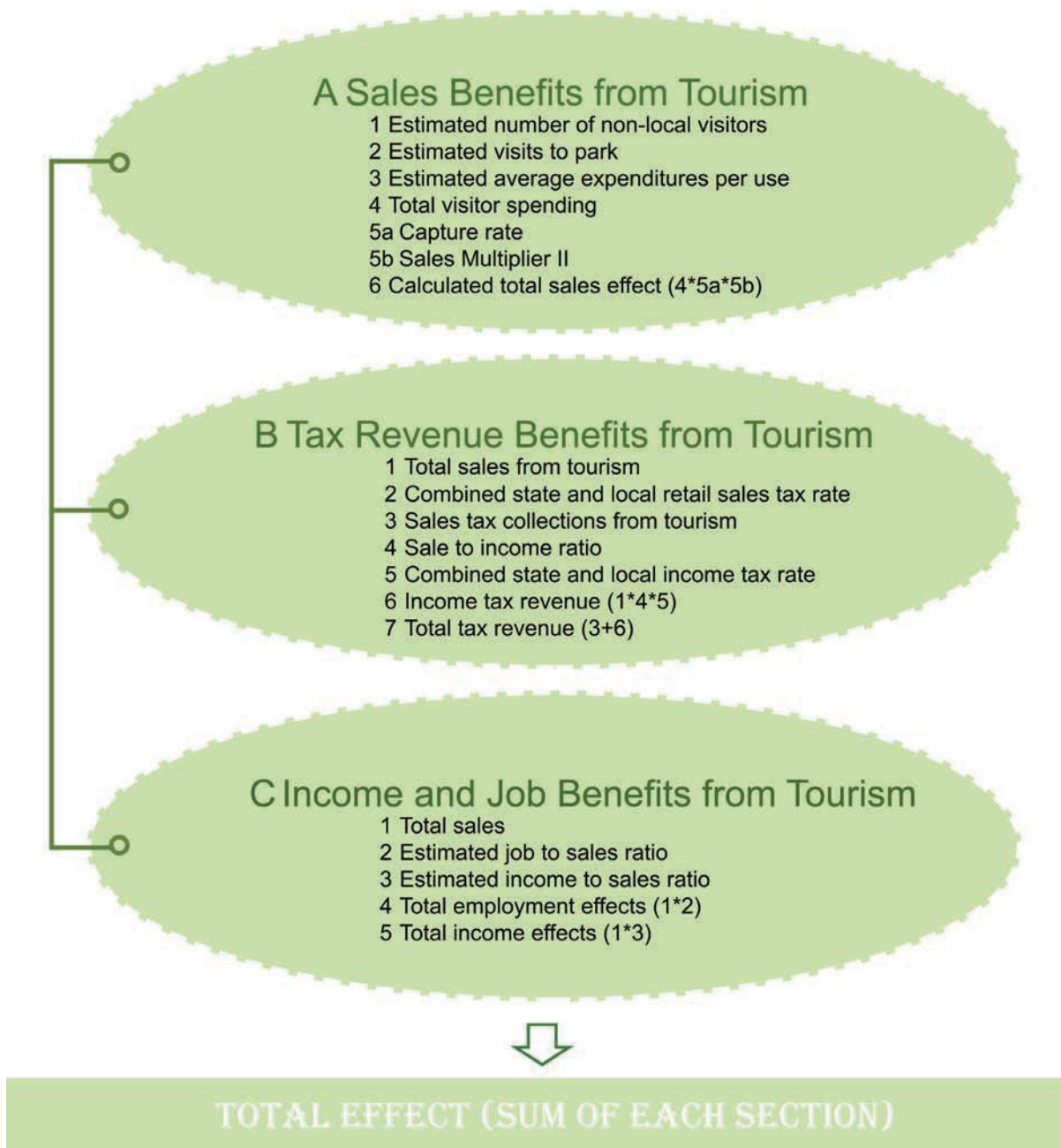


Fig. 21: Money Generating Model worksheet

of the economic impact a state park would have in Highland County can be made. The model predicts an additional \$4,200,000 in sales benefits from tourism in the county with a state park. Existing state parks with a similar total visitor spending saw on average \$8,000,000 in average economic activity and \$5,700,000 million in average economic impact. The model suggests that, once fully developed, a state park in Highland County would bring substantial economic activity to the area.

It is important to note that this model, though relying on averages from across the state, is conservative, and the real economic impact may be higher than what is reported here. For example, the capture rate used in this model was calculated from the average percentage of paying visitors to state parks. This estimation excludes the possible effects from non-paying visitors who purchase goods and services in the local area. There may also be unassessed economic benefits that occur during the development phase if DCR contracts with local construction companies on park development and build-out phasing.

End Notes

1. Heather Niday, "VGIF Manager Explains Why Swimming No Longer Allowed At Bullpaster Gorge – Allegheny Mountain Radio," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://www.alleghenymountainradio.org/vgif-manager-explains-why-swimming-no-longer-allowed-at-bullpaster-gorge/>.
2. "5573 Mountain Tpke Monterey, Virginia, United States – Luxury Home For Sale," n.d., <https://www.sothebysrealty.com/eng/sales/detail/180-l-4544-hrpych/dividing-waters-farm-monterey-va-24465>.
3. "Karst Program," n.d., <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/karsthme>. 27.
4. Daniel J. Stynes, "Approaches to Estimating the Economic Impacts of Tourism; Some Examples," East Lansing, MI: Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources, Michigan State University, 1999.

Evaluating Specific Potential Sites for Suitability as a State Park

To provide a recommendation to Friends of Highland County State Park on the feasibility of a Highland County state park, each potential site was evaluated using a combination of Virginia DCR criteria, Friends of Highland County State Park criteria, and criteria identified by the consulting group. These criteria were used to construct a scorecard, which was then used to assess each site.

Weighted criteria concern the primary considerations for the feasibility of a state park in Highland County: cost and programmatic potential. A state park in the county is valued as much for its ability to stimulate the local economy as it is for providing outdoor recreation. If the costs associated with acquisition and development of a park are improbable, an alternative should be considered. Similarly, if the available sites lack the features necessary to meet state park programming demands, an alternative should be considered. In the pre-planning phase, it is difficult to fully assess the overall investment needed to develop a new state park. This element in the score card was evaluated through a combination of the economic impact analysis results, estimated cost of site acquisitions, and estimated initial capital improvements that would need to be made by DCR. The identified programming potentials were supported by survey results, as well as stated interest by the Friends of Highland County State Park and existing elements in the Virginia State Park system.

SCORE CARD

SCORE 1-5



- Acreage (600 ideal minimum for VA DCR)
- Potential for bicycle paths/trails
- Potential for camping
- Cost of acquisition
- Existing, usable infrastructure
- Potential for fishing
- Potential for hiking & hiking trails
- Potential for building development
- Significant positive economic impact
- Taxable property
- Potential for wildlife observation

Sub-total
nx 1.5

- Access to emergency services
- Access to major roads
- Adjacent to public land
- Opportunities for wildlife observation/conservation
- Protected from adverse development
- Site specific agrotourism opportunities
- Site specific educational programming
- Site specific historical/cultural opportunities
- Topography

Sub-total
nx 1.0

- Internet/cell service

Sub-total
nx 0.5



Fig. 22: Score card worksheet. Selected criteria were informed by Friends of Highland County State Park, Department of Conservation and Recreation criteria, and survey results.

Final Site Recommendation: Hayfields Farm

After an in-depth analysis of each of the four potential sites, our team concluded that Hayfields Farm was the site that is most suited for a state park designation in Highland County. The site features a number of characteristics that are conducive to recreation and that will draw visitors, and their money, to the county. As such, Hayfields scored highly on many of the most important criteria outlined on the scorecard. Additionally, while the site does have its drawbacks, the team felt that through education and outreach, many of those drawbacks can be mitigated as the park designation process proceeds.

Positive Site Characteristics

Recognizing the 600-acre minimum park size metric adopted by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Hayfields Farm scored highly because the farm site sits on 1,100 acres—the largest defined site our team considered. Because DCR only permits twenty percent of a park site to be developed, the larger acreage of Hayfields Farm provides more opportunity for park development and programming than the other, smaller sites. Additionally, the topographic variation throughout the Hayfields site has the potential for development of bicycle paths, hiking trails, and equestrian trails. Further, the site abuts the WMA and programming at the site will only add to the existing opportunities for recreation, specifically engagement with wildlife, in the WMA. Altogether, these options for park programming also contributed to the Hayfields site's high score because the site lends itself to development that reflects the most desired and most utilized amenities as indicated by responses to our team's survey.



Bullpasture River at Hayfields Farm. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



Rendering of camping possibilities at Hayfields Farm.

In addition to the traditional outdoor recreation opportunities that could be implemented on the site, Hayfields has the potential to develop agrotourism programming through its barn, historic house, and hay production. Such programming would reflect the rich history and traditions of the county and its residents and would be unique within the Virginia State Park system. The site's agricultural qualities could also provide specific educational opportunities to students of all ages about farming and its role in Highland County and would be easily accessible to students in Highland County and other neighboring communities. Alternatively, the farm could continue to operate primarily as a farm and would yield approximately 1,000 bales of hay each year. This could not only provide additional economic benefits to the community through revenues and employment, but may provide educational opportunities as well. Because the potential for agrotourism programming was

emphasized by the Friends of Highland County State Park as an important consideration, the site's high score on this criterion was also significant compared to the more traditional recreation available elsewhere.

Two additional criteria also contributed to our team's recommendation of Hayfields Farm: accessibility and proximity to other public lands. In terms of accessibility, Hayfields Farm is close to the main east-west thoroughfare in Highland County. This could be beneficial for visitors utilizing U.S. Route 250, which the majority of visitors likely will. This location makes it more accessible than sites further from primary roads or deeper into the county. The site is also adjacent to the Wildlife Management Area, which could be beneficial throughout the future planning process. Not only does this proximity expand programming options at Hayfields, but it protects the site from adverse development because it the WMA



Rendering of signage for a state park at Hayfields Farm.

has been reserved for conservation. Most importantly, Hayfields Farm presents the best opportunity for positive economic impact of all the sites our team examined. Because Hayfields Farm is owned by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation could receive the property through donation or at a very low cost. Other sites we examined are privately owned and the cost of acquisition is dramatically more expensive and, potentially, prohibitive. Additionally, the property is already under conservation easement, so it is not significantly contributing to the existing tax base. The county would not lose revenue by giving up taxable land for a public purpose as a state park. Jack Mountain Village and Dividing Waters Farm both contribute to the county's tax base and would need to be purchased from private owners. Acquiring the Bullpasture Gorge site would require a lengthy and complex interdepartmental land transfer for acquisition and may result

in additional state expenditure because of conditions placed on federal grants used by DGIF to maintain the Bullpasture Gorge.

Since Hayfields Farm is owned and operated by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation it would be the easiest option to implementing a state park in Highland County. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation strives to “assume protection and public access to this property.” The Virginia Outdoors Foundation has the goal of partnering with government entities at all levels and non-profit natural resource and conservation groups to provide public access to Hayfields Farm so that it can become a space for public enjoyment and outdoor recreation.¹

Negative Site Characteristics

Although Hayfields Farm has many potential benefits, especially with regard to size, programming, and acquisition costs, it has possible drawbacks because of the current

events surrounding the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. As a result of the Section 1704 process that substituted Hayfields Farm for easement lands in Bath County, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation has received significant backlash for its role in the that process. Many Virginians who donated their land to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation were appalled to discover that the easements, which were assumed to provide protection in perpetuity, can be moved to other sites and leave once protected parcels open for development.

Consequently, there is a lack of public trust in both Dominion and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, both for environmental and private property rights reasons. The question our team considered is whether the potential benefits of a state park on the Hayfields site outweigh the negative connotation surrounding it because of the pipeline issue. During such a sensitive time, residents may view the state park as a political

maneuver used by Dominion, VOF, or both, to curry favor with the public. However, if the goal of the county is to have a state park that could bring the type of long-term economic development that may stem from designating Hayfields as a state park, then the site may be the best option in spite of current controversy.

Another potential drawback of Hayfields Farm is that the property is located in the southern half of the county, off a main road, and ten miles from Monterey, the county's economic center. A significant concern with the location of Hayfields is that visitors from outside the county, who will likely spend more per visit than a local, will choose not to travel past Hayfields Farm and deeper into the county. As a result of this failure to proceed beyond the park site, there may be limited secondary economic impacts from state park visitation. The benefit of Jack Mountain Village and Dividing Waters Farm, in contrast, are that the two sites force the



Rendering of biking and entrance possibilities at Hayfields Farm.

visitor to travel farther into Highland County. Driving through Monterey, visitors are more likely to visit local businesses and develop interest in the culture and community of Highland County.

While these challenges are not insignificant, our team concluded that education and outreach to both residents and visitors may mitigate these negative characteristics.

While the process undertaken to gain access to protected lands in Bath County is concerning and the controversy surrounding the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's role is clear, public engagement about the site itself and its potential for the county may outweigh the current negative public perceptions. Educating the public about land conservation, recreation, and development protection of state park designation may persuade members of the public who oppose the VOF-Dominion transaction on environmental grounds. Similarly, public education about the DCR designation

process, which does not utilize eminent domain and will not remove significant tax revenue from the county, may allay fears of those who opposed the easement exchange on private property rights and other grounds. Finally, concerns about the lack of connection to other Highland County assets can be addressed through effective marketing of the county to visitors and strengthening partnerships and links between the park and other attractions located elsewhere in the county.

End Notes

1. "Substitute Land Report: Hayfields Farm," January 2017, 9, http://www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org/download/board-docs/02-2017/bot/20170209_vof_bot_1704_A_SubRpt_Hayfields.pdf.

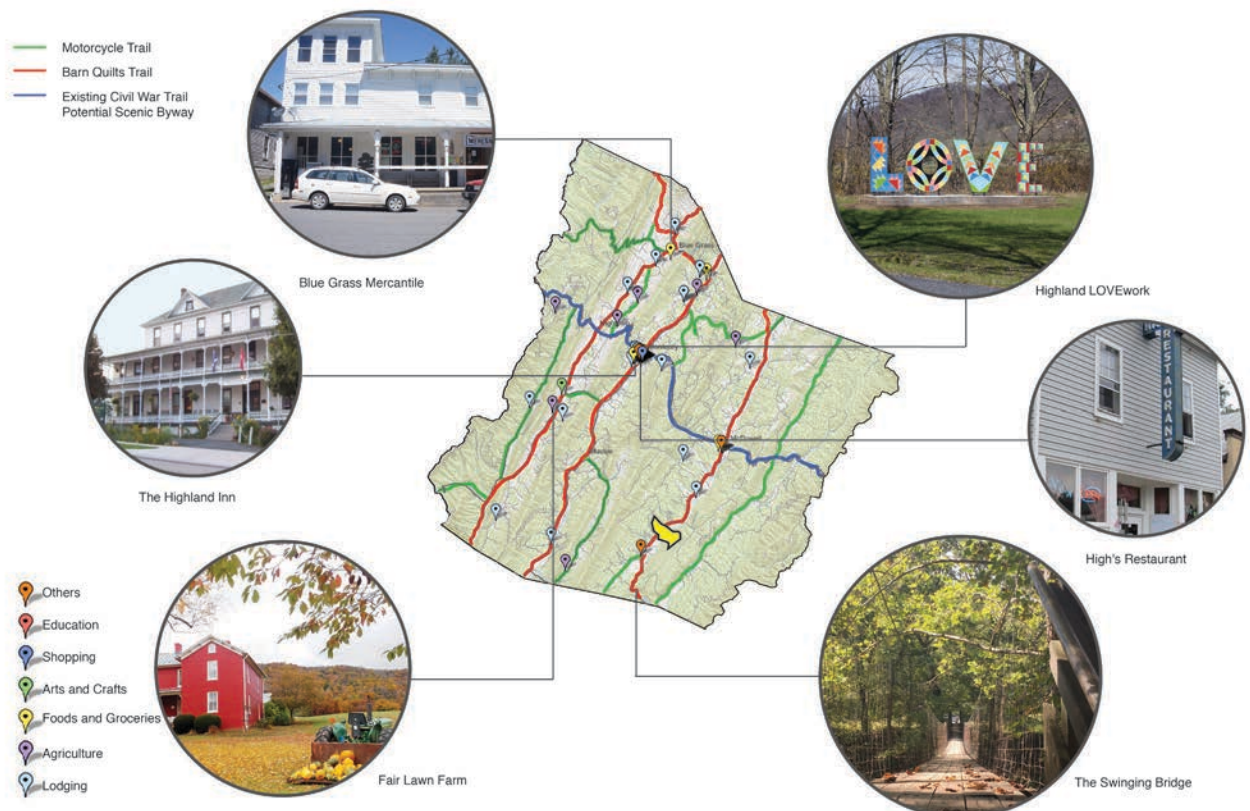


Fig. 23: Existing tourism sites relative to a state park at Hayfields Farm

Next Steps

Should Hayfields Farm become the proposed site, various issues must be considered and procedural requirements must be met before and after the site is designated as a Virginia State Park. Foremost among these next steps is compliance with the Department of Conservation and Recreation's procedures for park designation, master planning, and development phasing. Additionally, as the park designation and development process proceeds, planners and stakeholders will have to consider how best to acquire the desired property, potential funding source, and opportunities for partnership and cooperation with interested parties.

DCR Park Designation Process and Development Phasing

In order to officially designate a new state park, the Friends of Highland County State Park and other stakeholders will have to go through a lengthy approval process that includes both administrative and political components. The designation process alone can take years and, even once park designation has occurred, implementation of the park plan and full build out and programming may take decades to complete.

The preliminary steps are referred to as the “pre-planning phase.” The pre-planning phase essentially determines the basic feasibility and details for establishment of a state park. Considerations during this phase include site location, potential for acquisition, possible programming opportunities, public engagement, and cost-benefit analyses—many of these considerations are addressed in this report.

Once a park site has been chosen, it must undergo an extensive master planning process and the master plan



The driveway at Hayfields Farm. Photo credit: Elizabeth Nowak

must be adopted by both the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the General Assembly. The first step of the master planning process is to form an advisory committee and begin to broadly envision the goals of the state park. The advisory committee must be appointed by the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

After the advisory committee is established, two public meetings are required. Details regarding the site are determined, including park boundaries, its assets and challenges, and information about adjacent lands. This public engagement helps the advisory committee to make decisions about phasing of construction and program implementation. Additionally, a natural and cultural resource inventory is performed.

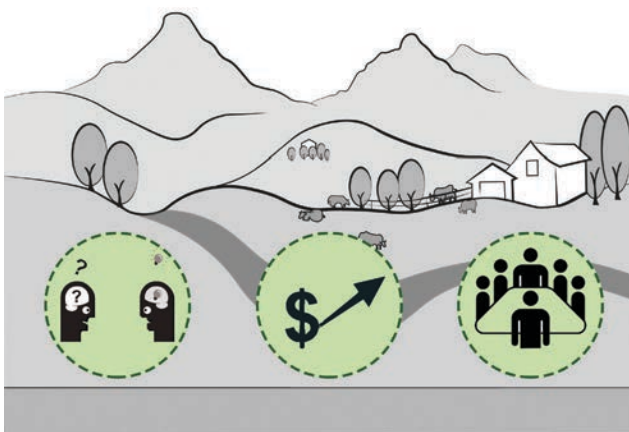
An initial master plan is then created that lays out goals and purpose of the park and serves as a guide for development,

utilization, and management of the park and its resources. Master plan proposals must include a purpose statement and descriptions of the park's goals and objectives. Public meetings must be clear and present the purpose, goals, and objectives to the public. The advisory committee must receive input from the public and incorporate it into future park planning.

The final master plan must include an inventory, site analysis, and a description of buildable areas. The plan will also explain the phases of development and prioritize proposed projects. It will locate land uses and facilities visually. Additionally, the plan will provide estimates of development costs, staffing and operations costs, and potential economic impact. Finally, the park's master plan will also include maps of the park site and its topographic and man-made features.

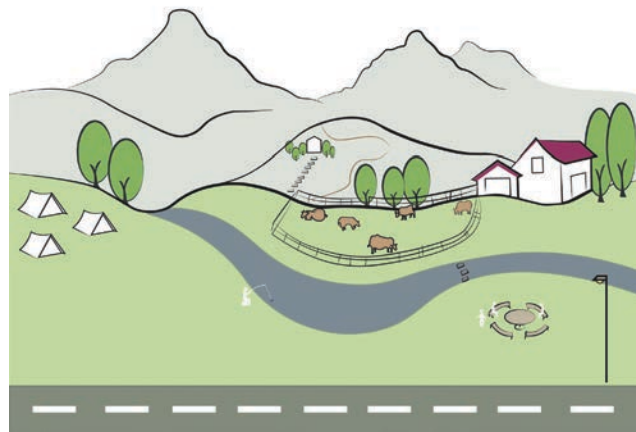
The committee will include a phasing schedule for the state park in the master

1



- Visioning
- Study of economic impact and public interest
- Site selection, acquisition, and dedication to the State
- Official park planning and public meetings

2



- Establish access points
- Improve internal road networks and parking
- Construct multi-use trails and signage
- Build contact station and hire park staff
- Build additional early infrastructure and develop programming

Fig. 24: The Virginia DCR park development process

plan. The entire park is not developed at once; it is a lengthy process that can take decades. Parks are developed in incremental phases that are subject to change based on a number of factors. Funding is one of the most common factors that will change phase implementation. Other factors that may alter the phasing include changing programming demands of visitors or significant increase or decrease in visitation rates.

In order officially become a state park, the master plan must be approved by the Board of Conservation and Recreation. Then, the plan is sent to the General Assembly for final approval. The approval process for a new state park follows Virginia Code § 10.1-200.1. The master plan must be adopted by the General Assembly within 30 days. Next, the plan is adopted by the Director of Conservation and Recreation and undergoes acquisition and dedication processes.

3



- Continue developing programming and building infrastructure
- Update park master plan as necessary

In phase one, initial development of the park begins. During the first phase of development, the park will work toward opening to the public. Access points are established and significant road networks, parking areas, and a park station are built. During early development, park is usually accessible only for day visitors, as the development of campsites and cabins has not yet commenced. The construction of multi-use trails and signage begins so that day use visitors can begin to visit the park. During phase one, park staff are hired and programming begins to develop.

During phase two, a park continues to develop programming and form its infrastructure. Camp sites and cabins will continue to develop and encourage more overnight guests to visit the park. Phase three is an extension of phase two, in which development of infrastructure continues and programming opportunities become more integrated into the visitor experience.

4



- Continue developing programming and building infrastructure
- Update park master plan as necessary

Updates to the master plan are required every ten years and those updates may alter build-out phasing, programming priorities, and park goals in response to changes over time.

To illustrate the park designation, master planning, and phasing processes occur in practice, our team analyzed the process as it occurred for two sites in Virginia—Clinch River Valley and Seven Bends State Park. In both instances, the required processes have taken decades to complete.

Acquisition by Donation

The lack of state funding for parks is not a problem unique to Virginia. Nationwide, states have been struggling to set aside money for the acquisition of new state park lands and for the maintenance or expansion of existing parks. Because states are struggling to find money for acquiring new park properties, land donation is an increasingly common method for acquiring

public lands. It is becoming easier for states to use and develop donated land for state parks. Various organizations, including the Land Water Conservation Fund and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, can help facilitate land donation for conservation and recreation by holding lands for the state until park designation or by assisting with valuation and development of donated lands. Additionally, private actors may see tax benefits for donating or willing land to be used for conservation or recreation.

In Virginia, the most recently designated state parks, including Widewater State Park and Seven Bends State Park, have been acquired through donation. Although a few of these properties have yet to open officially as state parks, they attest to the reality that the purchase of land by the state for a state park is increasingly unlikely due to the absence of funding and donation is an increasingly more effective route to state park designation.

Clinch River Valley Initiative

Since 1989, stakeholders in Russell County have been engaging the process to establish a Virginia State Park in the Clinch River Valley. In that year, the General Assembly ordered a study of potential recreational and natural areas that were suitable for preservation in the Clinch River Valley. This study was updated in 2005 and in 2008. It resulted in the development of six proposed development scenarios. In 2010, the Clinch River Valley Initiative (“CRVI”) was launched in Russell County as a collaborative effort to protect the sensitive ecosystem of the Clinch River Valley and to help revitalize local communities. CRVI has been working with members in the Virginia General Assembly and other organizations to move the proposal forward. Currently, CRVI has a vision plan of establishing a park by 2020. CRVI has been pursuing a state park as part of a broader economic development and environmental protection scheme.

Despite the concentrated efforts of CRVI and well established public and political support for a park, the potential Clinch River Valley State Park has only reached the point of land banking properties for donation to become a state park. As of spring 2017, the CRVI Action Group had made offers on several properties. At this time, it still seems possible for CRVI to meet their 2020 goal.¹

State parks provide social, environmental, and economic benefits to localities and to the state. Although there are barriers to purchasing the properties by the state, donated land provides a means to which park access can be expanded across the state. Donation of the Hayfields Farm site, or another site, may be the most feasible approach to park site acquisition. To facilitate such a donation, the potential benefits of donation, for the park system, the broader community of park users, and for donors, should be clearly articulated and relationships with potential donors should be cultivated.

Potential Funding Sources

A central theme of park planning is estimating economic costs and benefits of designating a state park site. As part of that analysis, park planners must, necessarily, consider potential funding sources that can be tapped when developing and maintaining a park site.

Perhaps the most significant funding source for the Virginia State Parks system is the appropriations from the Virginia General Assembly. As part of each budget cycle, the Governor proposes a budget and a budget bill is adopted. While the exact figures will differ from budget cycle to budget cycle, the Department of Conservation and Recreation receives millions of dollars in appropriated funds from the General Fund and from non-General Fund sources. For example, the budget proposal for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 allocated a total of \$124,700,000 to DCR. Of that total amount, \$68,300,000 was appropriated from the General Fund and \$56,400,000 was appropriated from the non-General Fund sources. In addition to direct appropriations for state parks, the Commonwealth also issued bonds, with voter approval, to fund state park acquisition and development in 1992 and 2002. Notably, the state park system also generates a portion of its budget through the fees it collects from park visitors. In

Seven Bends State Park

Like the Clinch River Valley Initiative, the designation process for Seven Bends State Park began in the late 1980s. Beginning in 1988, the Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River (“FNFSR”) have worked to protect the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. Unlike the CRVI, lands for Seven Bends was acquired partly through donation from a private individual and the Town of Woodstock and through purchase of land by the state government.

After the land was acquired, the site was designated a state park in 2005. Since 2014, FNFSR has acted as the official community support group that advocates for the park. During the period between dedication and the scheduled opening date, the park has been closed to public use. Since 2016, when the funds for park development were appropriated by the General Assembly, work has been underway to open the park for visitation by the public. Damage to a bridge on the site has delayed construction, but repairs are expected to be completed in 2018 and the park is scheduled to open in late 2018 or early 2019. Even though the park will be open to visitors, FNFSR explains that it will be years before significant infrastructure is developed within the park. The designation, master planning, and phasing processes for Seven Bends State Park have taken years and its example illustrates the decades-long effort to develop a state park even after designation has been achieved.²

all, forty-eight percent of the park system's operating budget stems from fees it charges. Because of visitation increases, the fee-based revenues have more than doubled since 2006 and that increase represents a significant investment by the park system in itself.³

The Land and Water Conservation Fund's State and Local Assistance Program is one of the potential funding sources for new state parks. The fund was established on the behalf of the National Park Service in order to assist the "acquisition and/or and development of public outdoor recreation areas." The fund is a matching reimbursement program that will match projects at a fifty-fifty percent ratio. The projects are typically reimbursed for their expenditures, but must provide project funding upfront.⁴

The Recreational Trails Program is another matching reimbursement program that state parks in Virginia may use to build and rehabilitate trails. The funding is provided by the Federal Highway Administration. The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation is an additional funding opportunity that provides state funding to conserve specific land uses. This include open spaces, parks, natural areas, historic areas, farmland and forests.⁵

The National Recreation and Park Association occasionally has opportunities for grants and fundraising opportunities that can be used for state parks. In addition, there are philanthropic giving opportunities that could help funding for the development of a state park in Highland County. Virginia State Parks already receive grants from the Dominion Foundation.

Partnership Opportunities

Parks that have an active relationships with conservancies, non-profit, and volunteer groups tend to be cleaner and

offer more amenities or programming options. Partnerships are important not only for funding assistance, but for providing investment in services and operations. Studies have shown that park advocacy groups have a greater influence on urban parks, but they exist for parks at all levels, including state parks. The Virginia Association for Parks is a state-level advocacy organization that provides for support all parks within the state of Virginia. In addition to political advocacy and public engagement, the Virginia Association for Parks also helps organize volunteers to support various parks throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, it provides technical assistance, training, and opportunities for networking for individuals who seek to create local park support organizations. Partnerships with the Virginia Association for Parks and other recreational support groups will ensure that a state park in Highland County can remain a public asset to Virginians and can leverage public support for the park.⁶

Since the Great Recession, state parks across the country have begun to rely on corporate donors and partnerships to close budget gaps. In addition to raising entrance fees, laying off staff, and relying on volunteer labor, states are finding that corporate partnerships are able to assist with environmental conservation and outdoor recreation efforts. Corporate donations are not the same as philanthropic donations because the corporations receive recognition for their contributions. Although state parks are historically free from commercialization, their daily operations are becoming increasingly dependent on private support. State parks across the nation are developing a business-oriented approaches to ensure that parks can remain a public resource. In addition, public-private partnerships are becoming increasingly common within state park systems. Moving forward, a state park

in Highland County should look to local businesses and other corporate actors in the Commonwealth as potential sources of investment because such engagement may benefit park development without impacting public funding sources.⁷

End Notes

1. "Clinch River Valley Initiative — Protecting Virginia's Hidden River & Supporting Local Communities," accessed May 11, 2018, <http://www.clinchriverva.com/>; "Clinch River Valley Initiative Action Plan," October 2017, <http://www.clinchriverva.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Action-Plan-Apr2018.pdf>.
2. "Friends of the North Fork | Support the North Fork of the Shenandoah River," Friends of the North Fork, n.d., <https://fnfsr.org/>; "Master Plan Executive Summary: Seven Bends" (Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, 2008), <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/document/mp4seexecsum.pdf>; "Master Plan Executive Summary: Seven Bends"; "Friends of the North Fork | Support the North Fork of the Shenandoah River."
3. "Department of Conservation and Recreation Agency Update & Overview of Governor's Introduced Budget," January 21, 2015, http://hac.state.va.us/subcommittee/2015_Subcommittee/agriculture_commerce_technology_natural_resources/files/1-21-15/DCR%20Presentation%2001-21-15.pdf.
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5. "LWCF Grant Program," n.d., <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>.
6. "Recreation Oriented Grants," n.d., <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/grants>.
7. "State Parks Seek Corporate Donors to Stay Open," n.d., <http://www.governing.com/topics/finance/state-parks-seek-corporate-donors-stay-open.html>.

Complementary Initiatives

While our team recommends locating a state park in Highland County, we recognize that the park designation process can take years and that other initiatives may help bolster tourism development and public momentum in the meantime. The alternatives presented below may provide some of the same benefits of a state park designation—notably, increased access to recreational sites and economic development. These initiatives could be pursued while the designation process takes place, in lieu of park designation, or as complementary actions that contribute to state park programming.

Scenic Byway Designation

Scenic byways are roads that are recognized by the Federal Highway Administration for one or more of “six intrinsic qualities: archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreation and scenic.” There are scenic byway designations at both the state and the national level. In Virginia, they are managed by the Virginia Department of Transportation in partnership with The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The designation process involves municipalities, citizens, and the state who cooperatively determine if a road section of at least 10 miles has aesthetic, cultural, historical, natural or recreational significance.¹

Scenic byways are not only valued for their aesthetics and historic significance, but they also promote ecologically desirable forms of tourism and increase income in economically depressed regions. Research shows that in order for the scenic byways programs to be successful economic drivers they need to have both proximity to other destinations and the workforce to support the amenities and recreational attractions that will draw visitors to spend money in the area. A scenic byway designation in Highland County may



only be economically successful to the extent that it has the infrastructure and manpower to support it. Highland County has considered a scenic byway designation the past, though it was not ultimately pursued at that time. Because scenic byways may draw visitors to the county, are not like to negatively impact traffic patterns, and do not place additional maintenance burdens on the community, the county should reevaluate a scenic byway designation as a way to complement a future state park and other amenities.

Making Private Lands Accessible to the Public

As described above, Highland County has natural areas that are ideally suited for recreational use. While a significant portion of those lands are considered “public,” an even larger portion of land in the county are held privately. Opening these privately held lands for public recreation may achieve the goals of increased access to recreational resources in the county and may positively impact the county’s economy. These arrangements, however, are not without their drawbacks.

Private Ownership and Management
One approach to increasing access to outdoor amenities or to environmental stewardship is through private parks and preserves. Private landowners have long exercised their rights as property owners to shield their lands from adverse development, to conserve natural resources, and to protect native species on their land. Private parks are organized in various forms, seek to achieve various goals, and can be found throughout the world.²

Private parks perform many of the same functions as traditional parks. Notably, privately-owned parks have been utilized as tools for environmental conservation and, in particular, protection of endangered species. In particular, private parks are especially useful tools for conservation and recreation in circumstances where government entities

lack the capacity to designate and maintain parks on their own. Additionally, private parks that are located in close proximity to publicly-owned lands can compliment those public lands and can add to the shared conservation or recreation mission.³

As mentioned, one significant benefit of private parks is their ability to work toward recreation and conservation when government does not have the ability to do so. Another benefit, which accrues primarily to the property owner, is the economic gain that may result from operation of a private park. In locations with high ecotourism value, private parks can be a lucrative business venture when they attract significant numbers of visitors. The positive economic impact of private parks may also flow to surrounding communities through increases in tax revenue, tourist spending in nearby communities, and “costs avoided” by local governments because they are not maintaining the park.⁴

Private parks also have weaknesses. In terms of their economic impact, private parks that are not successful at attracting large numbers of visitors may only provide marginal economic benefits to the surrounding area. Even if a private park is a popular tourist attraction, a park may suffer from fluctuations in visitation rates as tourism trends change or if there is economic contraction. Private parks may also be less well suited to conservation and recreation because of their susceptibility to change over time if owner priorities change. Additionally, access and equity concerns arise because private parks have the ability to charge fees at a rate the market will bear. This may limit visitation to only those patrons who are willing or able to pay for the privilege of visiting the park. There is also an inherent tension between the economic and environmental goals that most private parks seek to achieve because what is best for the park’s ecological



New River Trail Challenge. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



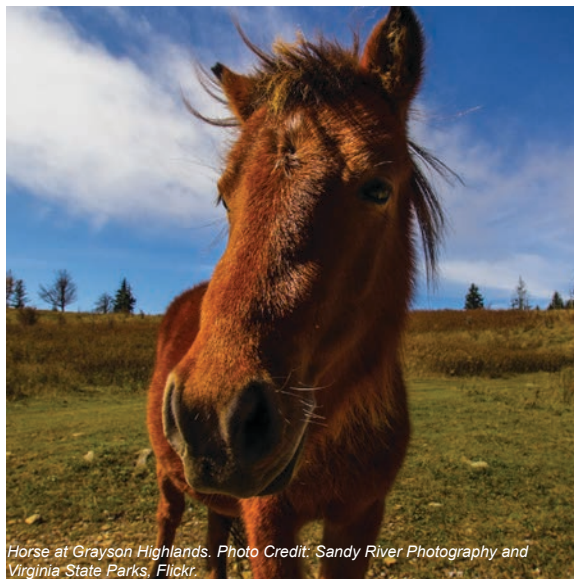
Douthat State Park. Photo Credit: Bill Crabtree Jr. Flickr.



Family at Farm & Forestry Museum, Chippokes Plantation. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



Jelly Stone Park. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



Horse at Grayson Highlands. Photo Credit: Sandy River Photography and Virginia State Parks, Flickr.



3rd Place Winner for First Hikes, 2016. Photo Credit: Virginia State Parks, Flickr.

health may not be what is best for the site's financial health and vice versa.⁵

Public Access to Private Land Through Recreational Use

Another method for opening private lands to public recreation is through increased use of the Commonwealth's recreational use statute. Since the 1950s, states across the nation have adopted recreational use statutes in an attempt to increase the availability of private lands that can be used by the public for recreation. Today, every state in the Union has adopted a recreational use statute. In essence, recreational use statutes limit private landowner liability for injuries suffered by individual who enter private property for recreational purposes. Landowners, however, are generally not shielded from liability under recreational use statutes if they charge an entry fee or if they limit access to specific individuals or a particular group of users. Additionally, the statutes often do not limit a landowner's liability if the landowner's conduct is "willful, wanton, or malicious" or when the landowner fails to warn visitors about or protect visitors from hazardous conditions on the property.⁶

Virginia's recreational use statute provides a long list of the recreational activities that are covered by the statute and includes: hiking, sightseeing, horseback riding, and bicycling—activities that are currently lacking in Highland County but for which the county is well-suited. Additionally, the statute limits landowner liability when access is allowed so that visitors can enter public parks or recreation areas which may be used in the county to improve access to the WMA or a potential state park. The statute does not limit landowner liability if a fee is charged for access to the site or if a fee is charged for a specific activity. Additionally, landowners who open their properties for "any sporting event or competition" are not protected from liability.

Encouraging private landowners to open their lands to public recreation in Highland County may achieve the goal of increasing access to recreational lands because it would provide more sites for residents and visitors to utilize. However, because landowners cannot charge entry or other fees to members of the public who wish to access their properties without losing their protection from liability, any positive, direct economic impact stemming from this approach is likely to be more limited. Additionally, it may be difficult to convince landowners to take advantage of the provisions of the statute for a number of reasons. Landowners with livestock, for instance, may need to limit access to their lands in order to ensure that livestock are properly contained. Further, landowners may value their right to exclude others from their land more than they value access to natural lands, they may not know about the liability protections in the statute, or they may not be able or may not want to access legal advice before opening their lands to the public or in the event that an accident on their property occurs. As such, a policy in the county that relies on landowners to allow access under the recreational use statute seems ill-suited to further the goals of economic development and increased access on a large scale.

State Park Land Banking

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's inventory of parks includes five parks that are considered "land bank parks". The state owns these properties, but they are not open for visitation. These lands have been acquired by the state, likely through donation, but the park's master plans have not yet been approved for visitation or the funding has not become available from the General Assembly. Virginia's land bank parks include Seven Bends, Widewater, Middle Peninsula, Mayo River, Biscuit Run, and Loudoun.



River at Natural Bridge State Park. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



The Natural Bridge. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak



View of the Blue Ridge Mountains from Natural Bridge State Park. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Partnership Arrangements

City and local parks are increasingly funded by high-profile public-private deals. Operating state parks through public-private partnerships (“PPPs”) is less common, but the increasingly limited funds for public services may make creative partnership arrangements necessary to fund the creation and maintenance of state parks. Budget cuts and other funding issues have forced state legislatures to reconsider priorities, with state parks often taking a backseat to more pressing public service issues. As a result, states are beginning to rethink the traditional funding process and turning to the private sector for operating costs as a way to fund public park systems within budgetary constraints and without burdening taxpayers.

Park PPPs would work by “transferring the responsibility of maintaining a state park to a private operator, while enabling that operator to raise revenue through entrance and other

fees.” For-profit management companies already operate public lands, including over half of the U.S. Forest Service’s developed recreational lands. Many states have instituted private partnerships in state recreation areas as well.⁷

The most successful park PPPs have occurred when public and private entities have long-term partnerships in which the contracts are made for private companies to take over park operation. One of the most notable examples takes place in California. After facing closure threats, the State of California structured a PPP system in their state parks in which the state retained ownership of the park while a private firm operated the parks for no cost. Concessionaries, who are responsible for maintenance and improvements, pay an annual rent to the state for using revenues that are derived from camping and other user fees. All of the revenues paid to

Natural Bridge State Park: A Virginia Public-Private Partnership

Natural Bridge State Park was privately owned until 2013 when the previous owner, a real estate developer, attempted to sell the property. The state determined that the property was a great asset to the Commonwealth of Virginia and would be a highly desirable location for a state park. The developer gifted the property to the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund. The non-profit paid for the park with loans from state agencies including the Virginia Clean Water Fund, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the Virginia Resources Authority. The property was then donated to the state. However, the state does not officially own Natural Bridge, and will not until the debt is paid off.

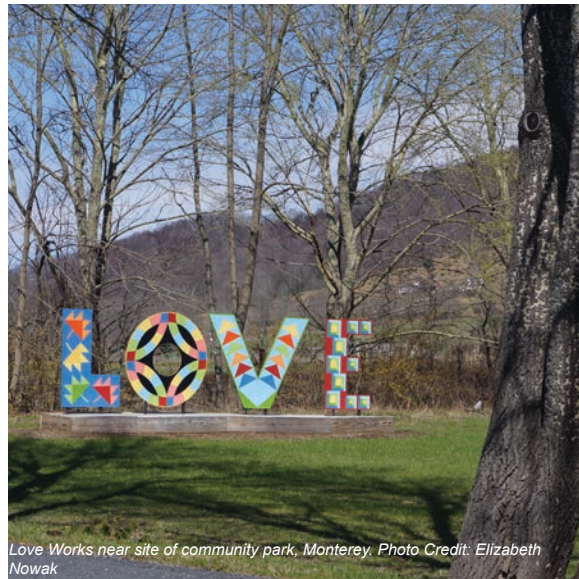
Natural Bridge State Park is the newest state park in Virginia. Natural Bridge sets an example of how privately owned lands could be acquired for the state park system in the future. Although the process did not go as smoothly as planned, it sets the precedent for a trend in which new state park properties could be donated through a non-profit, instead of purchased using state resources. Because funding for state parks is extremely difficult to come by, future land for public parks may need to rely on non-traditional types of land acquisition and management relationships to continue to provide the public with opportunities for outdoor recreation.⁸

the state for rent are put back into a park maintenance fund. The concessionaries can seek approval from the state to spend the money for more maintenance and infrastructure projects.

Although the operating costs would be limited through park operation PPPs, the role of the state legislature does not disappear. The same system of legislative appropriations would be in place and remain in charge of the oversight and management, programing, and operation of historic or natural assets. However, the PPP system would transfer all of the operating costs to a private entity so that the number of tax dollars appropriated to the state parks agency is radically reduced without losing the benefits of public lands.

Community Park

Public green space is important at every scale. While the other propose complementary initiatives emphasize cultural



Love Works near site of community park, Monterey. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Biscuit Run State Park: A Public-Public Partnership

Although State Parks have the potential to have tremendous benefits to state, regional, and local economies, they also have the potential to negatively impact localities if mismanaged.

The Biscuit Run property in Albemarle County is one of the state's "land bank parks" that is now going to be operated as a park but at the county level rather than at the state level. The property was acquired by the Commonwealth in 2009 through a combination of cash and tax credits. The property underwent a three-phase master plan but the funding for the park, roughly \$42,000,000, was removed by General Assembly, halting development. A small amount of state funding was put aside to construct road access and parking for day users, but the budget shortfall did not allow development of other elements of the master plan to proceed.

Since the state did not have the funding to start the development process of the park, the state collaborated with Albemarle County to open and operate the site as a county park instead. Albemarle County now holds a ninety-nine-year lease from the state at no cost, but is responsible for maintaining the site—an arrangement that may not be feasible in counties with more limited resources.⁹

and historical features in Highland County, they do not fulfill the need for access to public lands. Community parks can provide important access to green space, opportunities to stay physically active, gather as a community, and conserve natural areas.

In 2012, the Highland Center formed a park committee to determine a site and features of a community park. This undertaking was in concert with Friends of Highland County State Park goals of increasing tourism opportunities and improving access to public land. The chosen site, a parcel adjacent to the Highland County High School and Elementary School in Monterey, has been programmed to emphasize food and ecological education, as well as address Monterey's Civil War history through interpretation of a Confederate Cemetery recently discovered on the plot.¹⁰

While a state park would fulfill greater recreational needs, the Highland Center's plan for a community park will meet local educational needs and provide a place to foster native plants and bird habitats. This initiative will easily complement a state park by providing a secondary point of interest in the county for visitors and enhancing an overall mission to improve outdoor recreational and educational opportunities.

End Notes

1. "About America's Byways | America's Byways," n.d., <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways/about>; "Virginia Byway - Frequently Asked Questions," accessed May 11, 2018, <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/faq-byways.asp>.
2. Jeffrey A. Langholz and James P. Lassoie, "Perils and Promise of Privately Owned Protected Areas," *BioScience* 51, no. 12 (December 2001): 1079–85.
3. Langholz and Lassoie.
4. Langholz and Lassoie.
5. Megan Lawson, "Legal Issues Associated with Trails: An Introduction," n.d.; Code of Virginia, §29.1-509.B-D.
6. Code of Virginia, §29.1-509.B-D.
7. Leonard Gilroy, Harris Kenny, and Julian Morris, "Parks 2.0: Operating State Parks through Public-Private Partnerships" (Reason Institution, January 2013), https://reason.org/wp-content/uploads/files/state_parks_privatization.pdf.
8. "Natural Bridge State Park," accessed May 11, 2018, http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/natural-bridge#other_info; "The Donation of Virginia's Natural Bridge Named The Land Report's 2013 Deal of the Year | The Land Report," accessed May 11, 2018, <http://www.landreport.com/2014/04/the-donation-of-virginias-natural-bridge-named-the-land-reports-2013-deal-of-the-year/>.
9. "Albemarle County to Lease Land for Biscuit Run from State | Local News | Dailyprogress.com," accessed May 11, 2018, http://www.dailyprogress.com/news/local/albemarle-county-to-lease-land-for-biscuit-run-from-state/article_51bf40c-f19a-11e7-84af-cb0f0f63247d.html.
10. "Community Park|Highland Center," <http://thehighlandcenter.org/community-park/>.



Bluegrass Valley. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Nowak

Conclusion

The findings and conclusions offered in this report were presented at an open, public meeting in Highland County on May 6, 2018. Approximately 46 residents of Highland County were in attendance. Questions asked by audience members ranged from clarifying methods and procedural processes to concerns about land acquisition. From the discussion that followed the presentation, a number of themes emerged that echoed sentiments expressed in the resident survey conducted one month earlier:

- Concerns that state park development may invoke eminent domain for land acquisition, access, or utility development, and that such acquisitions will not be justly compensated;
- Concerns over the length of time that it will likely take to designate and fully develop a state park in Highland County;
- Interest in specific jobs that might be created as a result of state park designation and development; and
- Interest in a simultaneous dark sky designation for the state park.

The general mood seemed open to, if not anticipative of, the recommendation of pursuing Hayfields Farm as a state park site. Reactions during the presentation and discussion period underscored generally

felt mistrust towards Dominion Energy and irritation at the impact the removal of the farm had had from the local tax rolls. Participants seemed open to the idea that a state park might help ameliorate some of the negativity currently associated with the site.

Overall, participants at the meeting seemed supportive of seeking a state park in Highland County. The recommendations provided in this report should assist such a future endeavor. Continued efforts will need to be made to both temper expectations of quick designation and development and to inspire sustained interest and energy in the state park proposal. The complementary initiatives included in this report would be an excellent way to sustain local motivation in the process, as well as to develop the county's existing tourism assets.

Highland County has a unique history, landscape, and character that make it ideally suited to be a home for a Virginia State Park. Should a site in Highland County be designated a state park, the county will see local economic benefits and improved access to recreational assets. Establishing a park in the county will undoubtedly benefit county residents, however a state park will also likely positively impact the immediate region and Commonwealth residents as a whole. It is the recommendation of this report that Highland County should pursue state park designation on the grounds that it will improve both the locality's and the Commonwealth's economy, environment, health, and recreational choices.

Given the considerable time and resources required to acquire designation status and park development, it is strongly recommended that Highland County pursue a combination of complementary initiatives to further develop its tourism potential, as well as improve recreational opportunities and access to public lands.



Community engagement event at Maple Festival, 2018. Photo Credit: Boning Dong.



Community engagement event at Maple Festival, 2018. Photo Credit: Boning Dong.

Appendix A: Surveys and Survey Analysis

This appendix includes a brief discussion of the survey results, the full surveys distributed to residents and non-residents of Highland County, and the results. Paper surveys were distributed in March 2018 at the Maple Festival and an online version was made available in April 2018. The former was intended to reach both residents and non-residents and the latter to target only residents of Highland County.

Non-residents were the predominate respondent group during the March 2018 distribution. Respondents to this distribution overwhelmingly indicated they used Virginia State Parks, visited Virginia State Parks regularly, and would support the addition of a state park in Highland County. Written comments were few, though generally stated interest and support for a park. A few written responses from Highland County residents voiced opposition to the use of eminent domain to acquire land for a park and potential negative traffic impacts.

The online survey, which targeted residents of the county, elicited far more comments than the paper survey. Again, predominately these responses were supportive of a state park in the county. Similar concerns as in the March survey were submitted. In addition to these, several respondents voiced passionate concerns that the inclusion of a state park within the county would keep other industries from moving to the area, which would ultimately be to residents' detriment.

Ultimately, both surveys show an outstanding amount of support for a new state park to be located in Highland County. The concerns about such a proposition are unsurprising and are able to be ameliorated with education and inclusion on the process.

Highland County and State Park Visitor Survey

Instructions: The following survey asks about your recreational experience(s) visiting Highland County and Virginia State Parks. Please complete the following questions to the best of your ability. If a question is not applicable to you, or you wish not to answer, simply move on to the next question.

1. Where do you live? (City, State OR ZIP Code) _____
2. Please identify your age group:

___ Under 18	___ 26 – 35	___ 46 – 55	___ 66 – 75
___ 18 – 25	___ 36 – 45	___ 56 – 65	___ 76 or Older
3. Have you visited Highland County before? ___ Yes ___ No
4. If you have been to Highland County before, how many times have you visited? _____
5. When you have visited Highland County in the past, how long have your visits typically lasted?
___ One Day or Less ___ One Overnight ___ Multiple Days and Nights
6. If your visit includes an overnight stay where do you stay?

	Hotel/ Motel	Bed & Breakfast	RV Park	Campground	Friends/ Family	Other (Please Describe)
In Highland County						
Outside Highland County						

7. If your visit includes an overnight stay and you do not stay overnight in Highland County, where do you stay? (City, State OR ZIP Code) _____
8. What type of activities or attractions do you participate in when you visit Highland County? (Mark all that apply.)

___ Artistic Activities	___ Bicycling	___ Birding	___ Camping
___ Caving	___ Farming	___ Fishing	___ Gardening
___ Hiking	___ Horseback Riding	___ Hunting	___ Motorcycling
___ Organized Sports	___ Running	___ Stargazing	___ Swimming
___ Wildlife Observation	___ Other (Please Describe: _____)		
9. How did you learn about Highland County? _____
10. Do you visit Virginia State Parks? ___ Yes ___ No
11. How frequently do you use Virginia State Parks?
___ Daily ___ Weekly ___ Monthly ___ Seasonally ___ Yearly ___ Never

12. When was your most recent visit to a Virginia State Park and which park did you visit? (Month and Year, Name of Park) _____
13. How long do your visits to Virginia State Parks typically last?
☐ One Day or Less ☐ One Overnight ☐ Multiple Days and Nights
14. If you stay overnight when visiting a Virginia State Park, what type of accommodations do you use? (Mark all that apply.)
☐ On-Site Campground ☐ On-Site RV Park ☐ Hotel or Motel
☐ Off-Site Campground ☐ Off-Site RV Park ☐ Bed & Breakfast
☐ Friends/Family ☐ Other (Please Describe: _____)
15. Which of the following activities are you most likely to participate in at a state park? (Rank on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being most likely.)
☐ Arts and Culture ☐ Bicycling ☐ Boating
☐ Camping ☐ Canoeing/Kayaking ☐ Educational Programs
☐ Fishing ☐ Hiking ☐ History and Heritage
☐ Horseback Riding ☐ Hunting ☐ Motorcycling
☐ Picnicking ☐ Scenic Drives/Vistas ☐ Stargazing
☐ Swimming ☐ Wildlife Observation
☐ Other (Please Describe: _____)
16. Has a visit to a state park influenced your purchase of any of the following? (Mark all that apply.)
☐ Clothing ☐ Equipment ☐ Footwear ☐ Gasoline
☐ Groceries ☐ Local Arts and Crafts ☐ Restaurants ☐ Souvenirs
☐ Toiletries ☐ Other (Please Describe: _____)
17. When you visit a Virginia State Park, do you visit surrounding communities? ☐ Yes ☐ No
18. Would you visit a Virginia State Park in Highland County? ☐ Yes ☐ No
19. If a Virginia State Park were located in Highland County, which amenities would you most like to see? (Rank on a scale from 1-5, with 1 as your highest preference)
☐ Bicycle Paths/Trails ☐ Cabin Rentals ☐ Caving ☐ Fishing
☐ Hiking Paths/Trails ☐ Horse Paths/Trails ☐ Hunting ☐ Picnic Shelters
☐ Rock Climbing ☐ RV Camping ☐ Stargazing ☐ Tent Camping
☐ Wildlife Observation Areas ☐ Other (Please Describe: _____)
20. Additional Comments: _____

Thank you for completing this survey! Please return it to the information table. Alternatively, mail the completed survey to:
Ascend Consulting Group c/o Ellen Bassett
University of Virginia School of Architecture
Campbell Hall, P.O. Box 400122
Charlottesville, Virginia 22904

Highland County Resident Survey

Instructions: The following survey asks about your recreational experience(s) visiting Highland County and Virginia State Parks. Please complete the following questions to the best of your ability. If a question is not applicable to you, or you wish not to answer, simply move on to the next question.

1. Please identify your age group:

☐ Under 18 ☐ 26 – 35 ☐ 46 – 55 ☐ 66 – 75
☐ 18 – 25 ☐ 36 – 45 ☐ 56 – 65 ☐ 76 or Older

2. What types of outdoor recreational activities do you do in Highland County?

☐ Artistic Activities ☐ Bicycling ☐ Birding ☐ Camping
☐ Caving ☐ Farming ☐ Fishing ☐ Gardening
☐ Hiking ☐ Horseback Riding ☐ Hunting ☐ Motorcycling
☐ Organized Sports ☐ Running ☐ Stargazing ☐ Swimming
☐ Wildlife Observation ☐ Other (Please Describe: _____)

3. When non-residents visit you, what attractions or activities do you prefer to participate in with them? (Rank on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being most preferred.)

☐ Attending Festivals ☐ Bicycling ☐ Birding ☐ Camping
☐ Caving ☐ Fishing ☐ Hiking ☐ Horseback Riding
☐ Hunting ☐ Motorcycling ☐ Organized Sports ☐ Running
☐ Sightseeing ☐ Stargazing ☐ Swimming
☐ Visiting Family/Friends ☐ Wildlife Observation
☐ Other Activities in Highland County (Please Describe: _____)

4. When non-residents visit you, what attractions or activities do you take them to see that are **NOT** in Highland County? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Bicycling ☐ Birding ☐ Boating ☐ Camping
☐ Canoeing/Kayaking ☐ Caving ☐ Fishing ☐ Hiking
☐ History and Heritage ☐ Horseback Riding ☐ Hunting ☐ Motorcycling
☐ Organized Sports ☐ Running ☐ Sightseeing ☐ Stargazing
☐ Swimming ☐ Visiting Family/Friends ☐ Wildlife Observation
☐ Other Activities **NOT** in Highland County (Please Describe including location: _____)

5. Do you visit Virginia State Parks? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. How frequently do you use Virginia State Parks?

☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Seasonally ☐ Yearly ☐ Never

7. When was your most recent visit to a Virginia State Park and which park did you visit? (Month and Year, Name of Park) _____

8. How long do your visits to Virginia State Parks typically last?

☐ One Day or Less ☐ One Overnight ☐ Multiple Days and Nights

9. If you stay overnight, what type of accommodations do you use? (Mark all that apply.)
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> On-Site Campground | <input type="checkbox"/> On-Site RV Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel or Motel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Off-Site Campground | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-Site RV Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Bed & Breakfast |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends/Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Describe: _____) | |
10. Which of the following activities are you most likely to participate in at a state park? (Rank on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being most likely.)
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Boating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing/Kayaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> History and Heritage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horseback Riding | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking | <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic Drives/Vistas | <input type="checkbox"/> Stargazing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Observation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Describe: _____) | | |
11. Has a visit to a state park influenced your purchase of any of the following? (Mark all that apply.)
- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Footwear | <input type="checkbox"/> Gasoline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Groceries | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Arts and Crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurants | <input type="checkbox"/> Souvenirs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Describe: _____) | | |
12. When you visit a Virginia State Park, do you visit surrounding communities? ☐ Yes ☐ No
13. Would you visit a Virginia State Park in Highland County? ☐ Yes ☐ No
14. If a Virginia State Park were located in Highland County, which amenities would you most like to see? (Rank on a scale from 1-5, with 1 as your highest preference.)
- | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle Paths/Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Cabin Rentals | <input type="checkbox"/> Caving | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking Paths/Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse Paths/Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic Shelters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing | <input type="checkbox"/> RV Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Stargazing | <input type="checkbox"/> Tent Camping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Observation Areas | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Describe: _____) | | |
15. Additional Comments: _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Thank you for completing this survey! Please return it to the information table. Alternatively, mail the completed survey to:

Ascend Consulting Group c/o Ellen Bassett
University of Virginia School of Architecture
Campbell Hall, P.O. Box 400122
Charlottesville, Virginia 22904

Non-Resident Survey Results

Survey	City	State	Zip	Under 18	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76+	Total	Total Response Rate
Q1													
Q2	Age Group			11	19	21	25	21	37	17	4	155	100%
Q3	Visited Highland County?												
	Yes			3	11	17	20	18	26	11	4	110	71%
	No			8	7	3	4	3	10	3	0	38	25%
Q4	Number of visits												
Q5	Length of stay												
	One day or less			4	11	12	14	11	15	7	2	76	49%
	One overnight			2	2	2	1	3	6	0	0	16	10%
	Multiple days & nights			0	1	3	3	3	9	5	2	26	17%
Q6	HC Lodging											0	
	Hotel/Motel			0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	5	3%
	B&B			0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	5	3%
	Campground			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	Friends/Family			2	1	0	2	1	4	0	0	10	6%
	Other			1	4	3	3	0	5	1	2	19	12%
	NHC Lodging												
	Hotel/Motel			0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1%
	B&B			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	Campground			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	Friends/Family			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	Other			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Q7	NHC Location of stay												
Q8	Activities in HC												
	1 Artistic Activities			0	4	4	4	7	13	6	2	40	26%
	2 Bicycling			0	1	2	5	2	8	2	1	21	14%
	3 Birding			0	0	0	2	1	8	3	1	15	10%
	4 Camping			6	5	5	10	8	11	5	1	51	33%
	5 Caving			0	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	12	8%
	6 Farming			0	1	2	2	0	4	0	0	9	6%
	7 Fishing			0	5	2	8	7	8	2	0	32	21%
	8 Gardening			0	0	0	1	1	5	5	0	12	8%
	9 Hiking			6	6	10	12	9	13	4	2	62	40%
	10 Horseback Riding			0	3	0	2	2	3	0	0	10	6%
	11 Hunting			1	3	4	4	2	4	1	1	20	13%
	12 Motorcycling			0	1	3	0	1	2	5	1	13	8%
	13 Organized Sports			0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3	2%
	14 Running			0	1	2	4	2	1	0	0	10	6%
	15 Stargazing			1	3	4	4	3	4	3	0	22	14%
	16 Swimming			0	1	1	7	1	2	3	0	15	10%
	17 Wildlife Observation			2	2	6	11	8	13	8	1	51	33%
	18 Other			4	4	8	8	4	7	4	2	41	26%
Q9	How did you learn about HC												
Q10	Do you visit VA State Parks												
	Yes			11	15	19	23	18	34	13	4	137	88%
	No			0	3	1	1	3	1	1	0	10	6%

Q11	Frequency of visits to state parks															
	Daily	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1%
	Weekly	1	0	1	2	1	3	1	0	9	0	0	0	0	9	6%
	Monthly	3	4	7	4	5	5	3	1	32	1	0	0	0	32	21%
	Seasonally	4	8	10	13	7	22	7	1	72	1	0	0	0	72	46%
	Yearly	3	2	3	4	5	3	3	2	25	0	0	0	0	25	16%
	Never	0	3	1	0	3	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	5%
Q12	Date most recent visit															
Q13	Park most recent visit															
	Length of visit to state park															
	One day or less	4	14	15	16	9	22	9	3	92	0	0	0	0	92	59%
	One overnight	5	1	2	3	5	3	2	0	21	0	0	0	0	21	14%
	Multiple days & nights	2	1	3	3	3	13	2	1	28	0	0	0	0	28	18%
Q14	Accommodation at state park															
	On-site Campground	6	6	10	14	9	11	1	1	58	0	0	0	0	58	37%
	On-site RV Park	0	0	0	3	2	4	1	0	10	0	0	0	0	10	6%
	Hotel/Motel	0	0	0	2	0	8	3	0	13	0	0	0	0	13	8%
	Off-Site Campground	2	1	3	1	5	3	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	15	10%
	Off-Site RV Park	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	2%
	B&B	0	1	1	1	0	3	1	0	7	0	0	0	0	7	5%
	Friends/Family	1	2	2	2	2	3	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	12	8%
	Other	0	1	3	0	1	6	2	0	13	0	0	0	0	13	8%
Q15	Most likely activities at state park															
	Arts & Culture	1	6	6	3	5	11	7	1	40	1	0	0	0	40	26%
	Bicycling	6	6	4	11	7	5	2	0	41	0	0	0	0	41	26%
	Boating	1	2	2	9	7	6	2	2	31	0	0	0	0	31	20%
	Camping	8	9	13	19	13	11	5	1	79	1	0	0	0	79	51%
	Canoeing/Kayaking	4	7	9	10	10	16	4	1	61	1	0	0	0	61	39%
	Educational Programs	1	2	2	6	5	8	4	1	29	1	0	0	0	29	19%
	Fishing	6	9	4	14	8	9	2	2	54	0	0	0	0	54	35%
	Hiking	7	14	16	19	13	26	10	2	107	2	0	0	0	107	69%
	History & Heritage	0	8	6	7	4	15	5	2	47	0	0	0	0	47	30%
	Horseback Riding	0	3	3	3	3	4	1	0	17	0	0	0	0	17	11%
	Hunting	1	6	2	2	4	1	2	0	18	0	0	0	0	18	12%
	Motorcycling	0	2	1	1	2	3	4	0	13	0	0	0	0	13	8%
	Picnicking	3	10	6	12	8	17	10	2	68	0	0	0	0	68	44%
	Scenic Drives/Vistas	2	9	13	12	8	17	10	1	72	1	0	0	0	72	46%
	Stargazing	4	4	6	4	4	6	3	0	31	0	0	0	0	31	20%
	Swimming	4	7	7	10	9	8	7	1	53	1	0	0	0	53	34%
	Wildlife Observation	4	4	5	10	7	23	8	2	63	0	0	0	0	63	41%
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1%

Q16	Does visit influence purchases?		6	8	7	10	7	12	4	0	54	35%
	Clothing											
	Equipment		4	8	6	13	5	7	0	0	43	28%
	Footwear		4	4	6	10	4	6	2	0	36	23%
	Gasoline		2	3	8	4	5	5	2	2	31	20%
	Groceries		2	5	6	9	6	9	3	1	41	26%
	Local Arts & Crafts		2	5	7	8	5	16	3	1	47	30%
	Restaurants		0	2	9	6	9	15	6	2	49	32%
	Souvenirs		3	6	5	12	4	13	4	1	48	31%
	Toiletries		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	Other		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1%
Q17	Visit surrounding communities?											
	Yes		7	15	17	20	17	31	12	4	123	79%
	No		4	2	3	3	1	3	0	0	16	10%
Q18	Visit a state park in HC											
	Yes		11	16	19	24	20	32	12	4	138	89%
	No		0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	4	3%
Q19	Amenities/activities at a HC park											
	Bicycle Paths/Trails		8	9	9	14	7	16	4	1	68	44%
	Cabin Rentals		1	7	11	11	10	16	7	1	64	41%
	Caving		2	8	8	7	8	3	2	2	40	26%
	Fishing		6	10	8	12	10	14	3	2	65	42%
	Hiking Paths/Trails		10	17	21	21	16	28	8	3	124	80%
	Horse Paths/Trails		1	3	2	7	4	7	2	0	26	17%
	Hunting		2	7	3	4	5	3	1	0	25	16%
	Picnic Shelters		4	12	8	10	7	10	5	0	56	36%
	Rock Climbing		6	9	5	7	5	7	2	0	41	26%
	RV Camping		2	1	3	5	5	10	2	1	29	19%
	Stargazing		2	7	8	10	5	10	6	0	48	31%
	Tent Camping		7	9	11	13	11	10	2	1	64	41%
	Wildlife Observation		3	10	9	14	11	21	7	2	77	50%
	Other		0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	4	3%
Q20	Additional comments											

Q20

Additional comments

would love to see ?? to highland

Been to every VA state park, would love for one to be in Highland County

Be sure to include nature, history, arts and culture
"Love Highland!"

I would love to see a state park in Highland County

It would be a beautiful place for a state park!

Thanks for what you do! Will visit state parks soon!
Wonderful idea.

I am not in support of anything that involves
eminent domain or land development, ie ...
commercialization; obstruction of natural views;
loss of generational lands

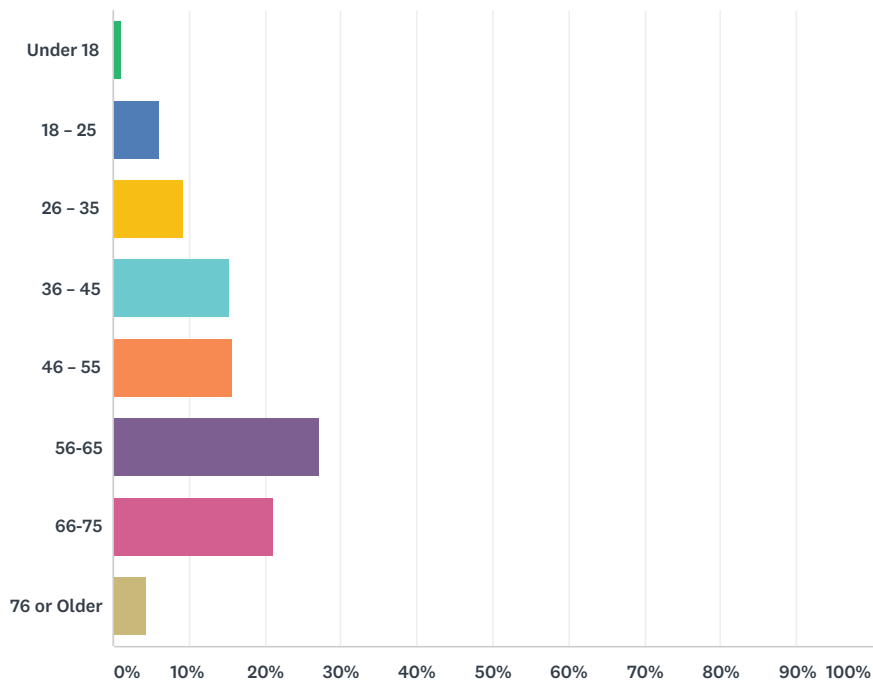
Resident Survey Results

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey

Q1 Please identify your age group:

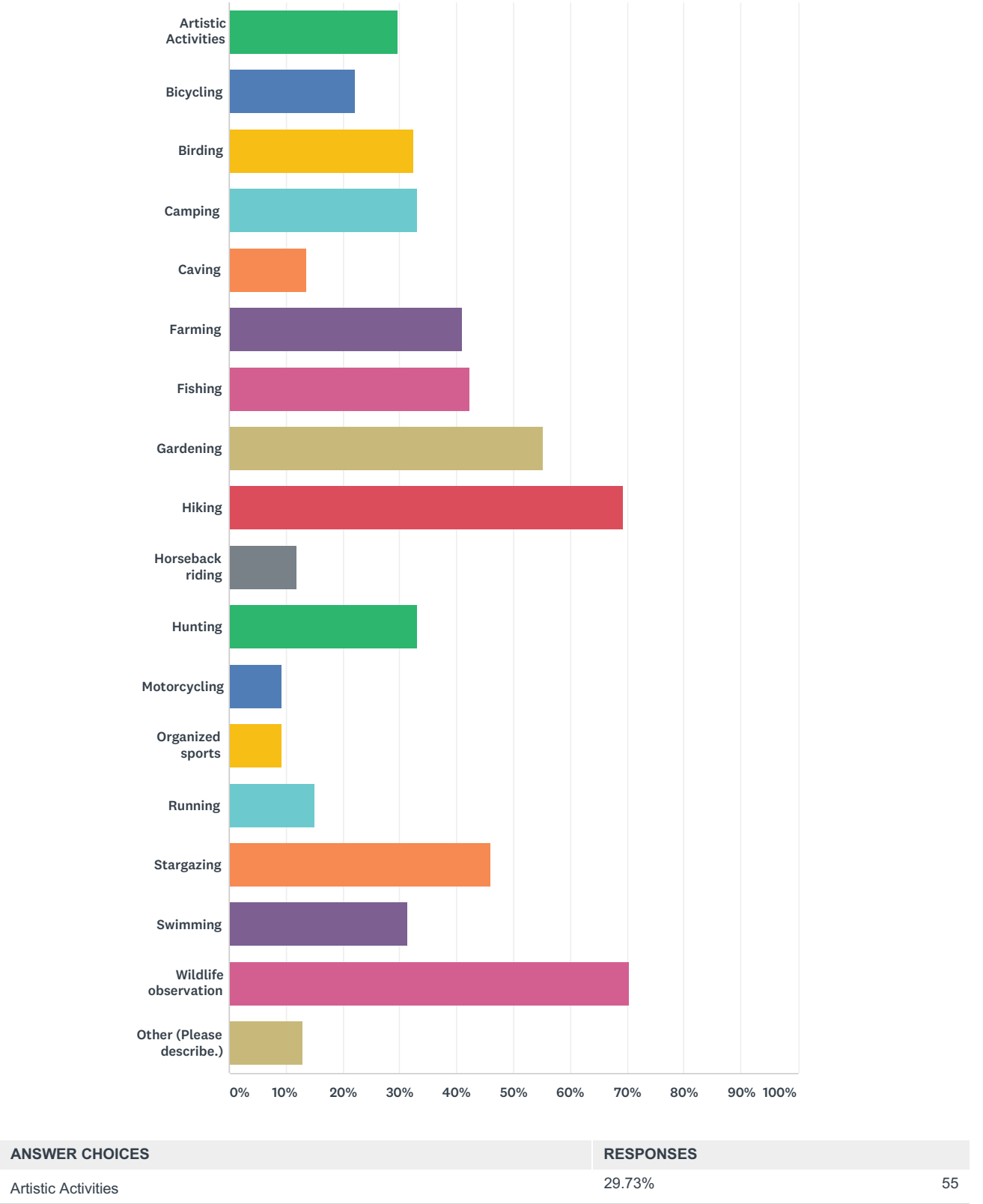
Answered: 184 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 18	1.09%2
18 – 25	5.98%11
26 – 35	9.24%17
36 – 45	15.22%28
46 – 55	15.76%29
56-65	27.17%50
66-75	21.20%39
76 or Older	4.35%8
TOTAL	184

Q2 What types of outdoor recreational activities do you do in Highland County?

Answered: 185 Skipped: 1



Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey

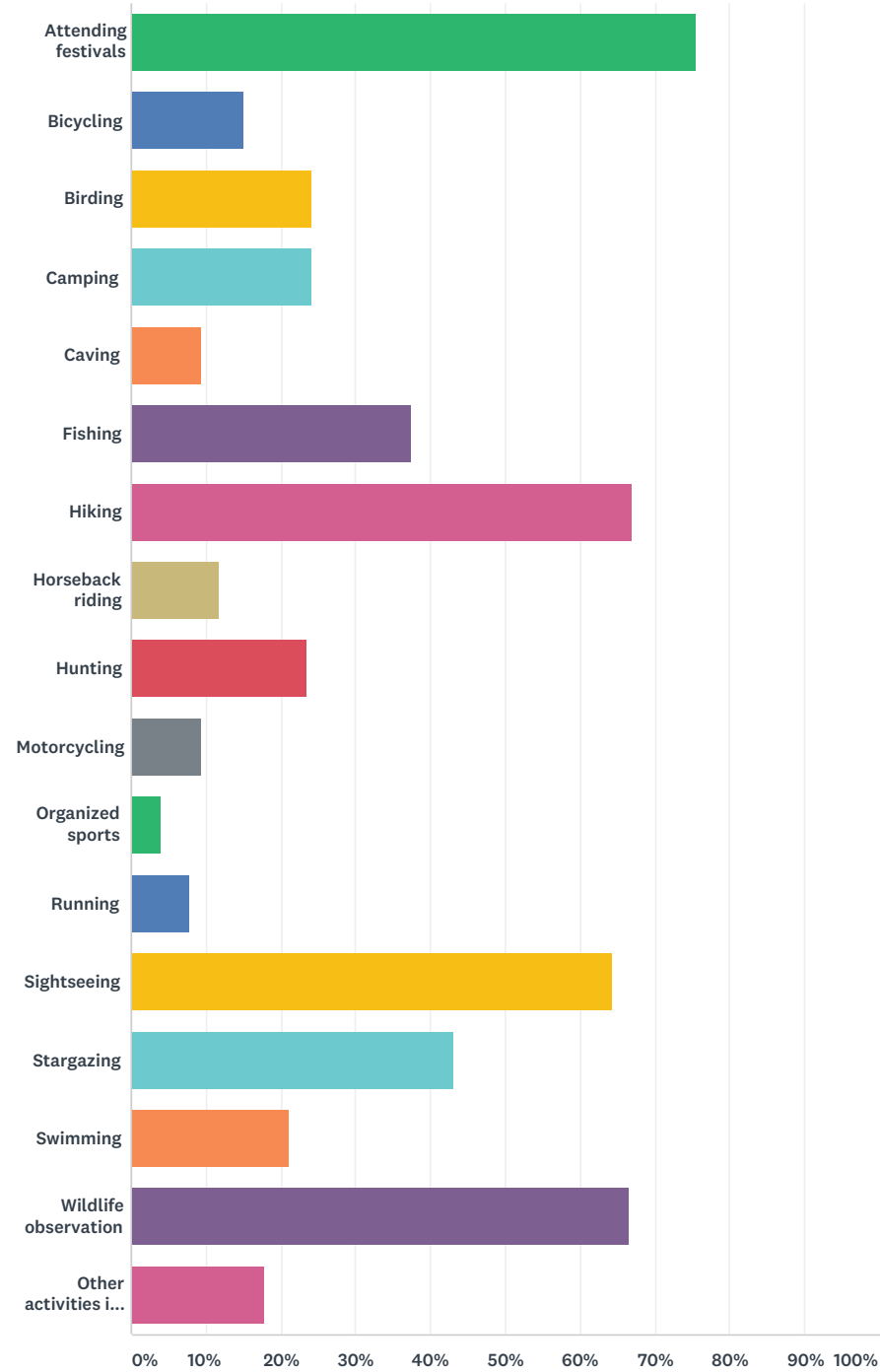
Bicycling	22.16%	41
Birding	32.43%	60
Camping	32.97%	61
Caving	13.51%	25
Farming	41.08%	76
Fishing	42.16%	78
Gardening	55.14%	102
Hiking	69.19%	128
Horseback riding	11.89%	22
Hunting	32.97%	61
Motorcycling	9.19%	17
Organized sports	9.19%	17
Running	15.14%	28
Stargazing	45.95%	85
Swimming	31.35%	58
Wildlife observation	70.27%	130
Other (Please describe.)	12.97%	24
Total Respondents: 185		

Q3 Please describe your "other" from Q2 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Answered: 142 Skipped: 44

Q4 When non-residents visit you, what attractions or activities do you prefer to participate in with them? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 179 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Attending festivals	75.42%	135
Bicycling	15.08%	27
Birding	24.02%	43

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey

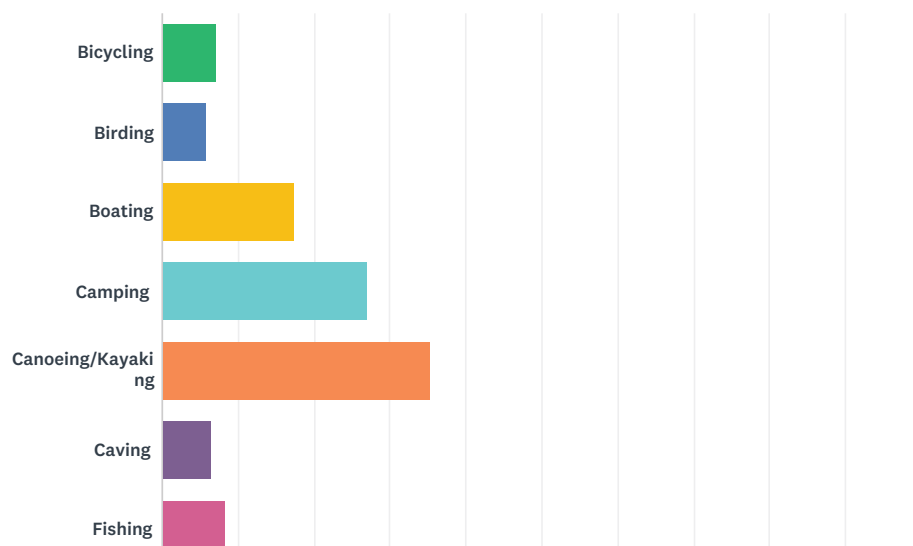
Camping	24.02%	43
Caving	9.50%	17
Fishing	37.43%	67
Hiking	67.04%	120
Horseback riding	11.73%	21
Hunting	23.46%	42
Motorcycling	9.50%	17
Organized sports	3.91%	7
Running	7.82%	14
Sightseeing	64.25%	115
Stargazing	43.02%	77
Swimming	21.23%	38
Wildlife observation	66.48%	119
Other activities in Highland County (Please describe.)	17.88%	32
Total Respondents: 179		

Q5 Please describe "other" from Q4 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Answered: 142 Skipped: 44

Q6 When non-residents visit you, what attractions or activities do you take them to see that are NOT in Highland County?

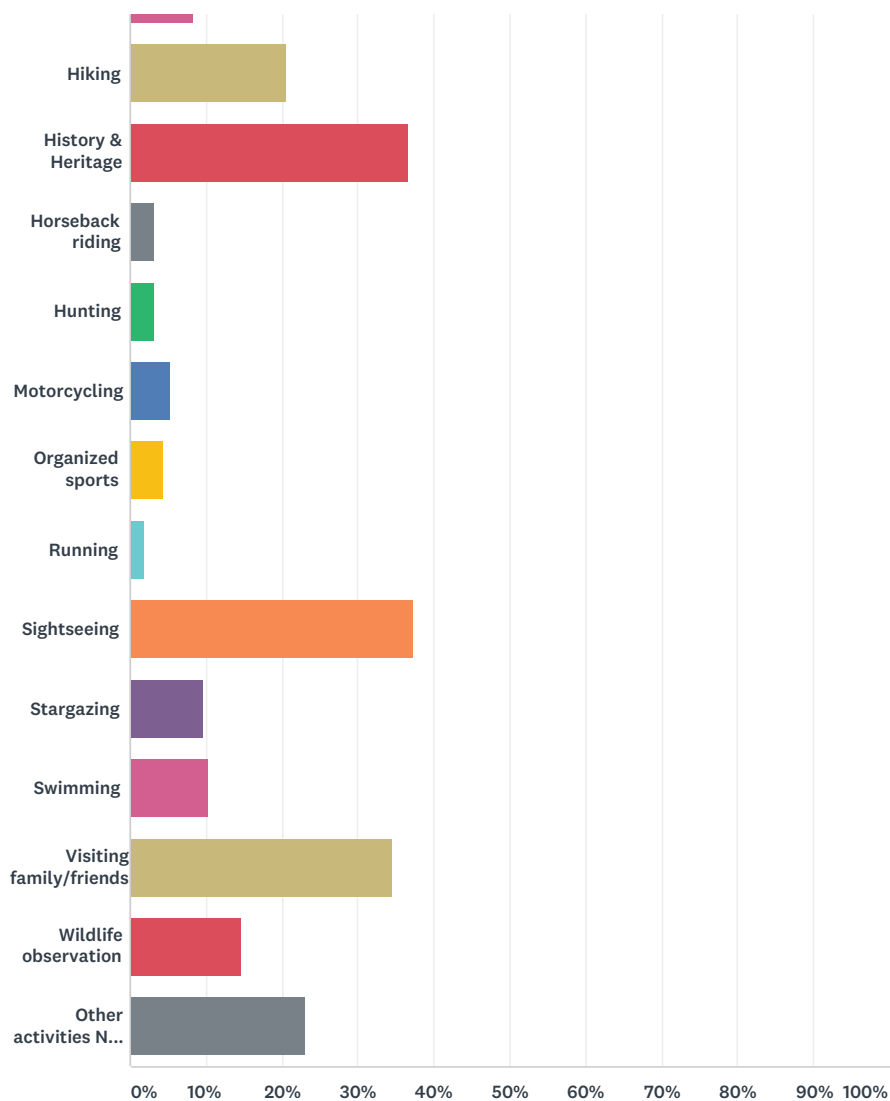
Answered: 156 Skipped: 30



5 / 18

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bicycling	7.05%	11
Birding	5.77%	9
Boating	17.31%	27
Camping	26.92%	42
Canoeing/Kayaking	35.26%	55
Caving	6.41%	10
Fishing	8.33%	13
Hiking	20.51%	32
History & Heritage	36.54%	57
Horseback riding	3.21%	5

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey

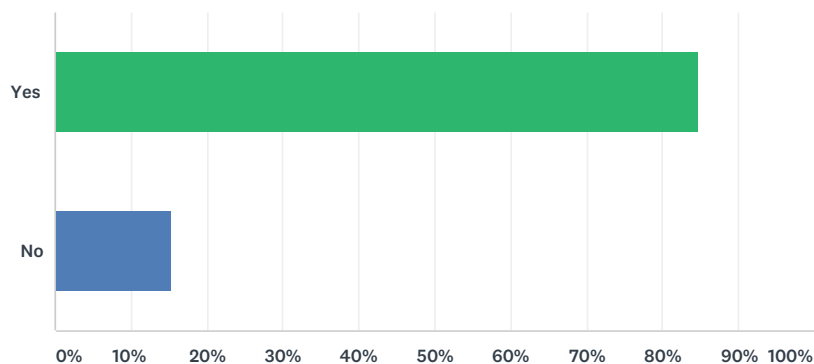
Hunting	3.21%	5
Motorcycling	5.13%	8
Organized sports	4.49%	7
Running	1.92%	3
Sightseeing	37.18%	58
Stargazing	9.62%	15
Swimming	10.26%	16
Visiting family/friends	34.62%	54
Wildlife observation	14.74%	23
Other activities NOT in Highland County (Please describe.)	23.08%	36
Total Respondents: 156		

Q7 Please describe "other" from Q6 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Answered: 136 Skipped: 50

Q8 Do you visit Virginia State Parks?

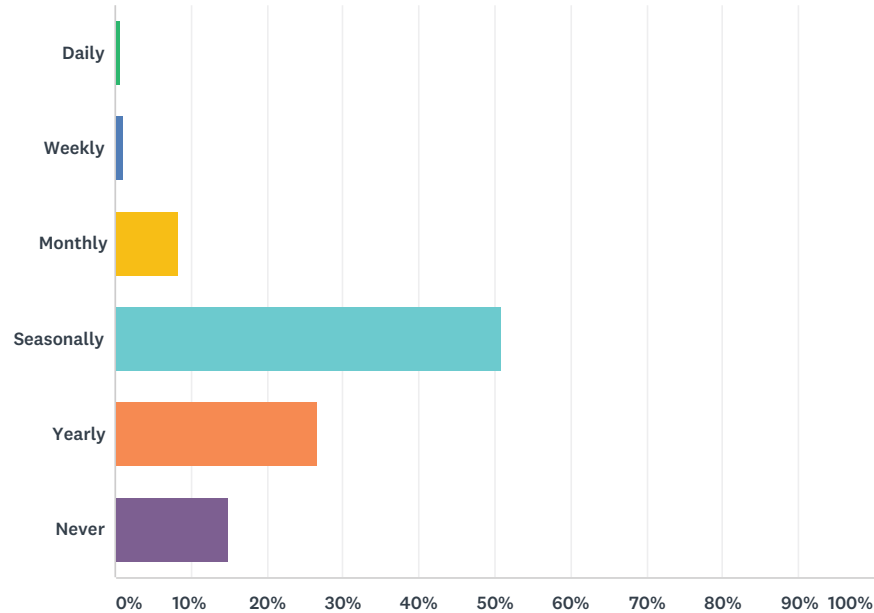
Answered: 183 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	84.70%	155
No	15.30%	28
Total Respondents: 183		

Q9 How frequently do you use Virginia State Parks?

Answered: 181 Skipped: 5



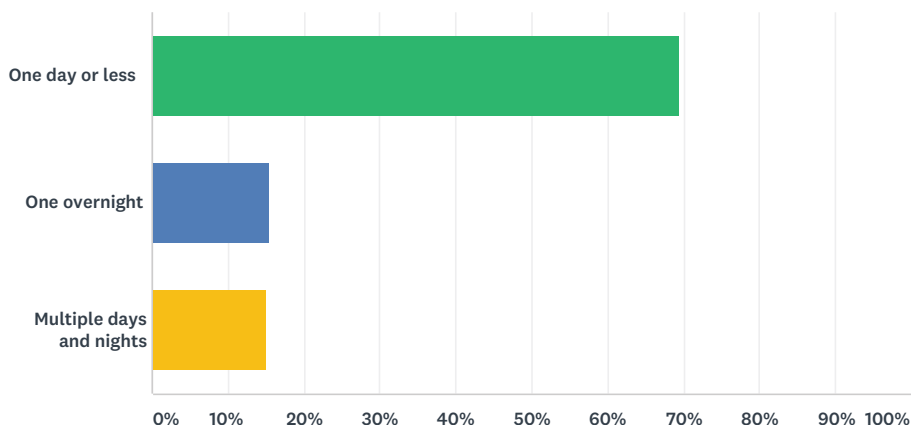
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Daily	0.55%	1
Weekly	1.10%	2
Monthly	8.29%	15
Seasonally	50.83%	92
Yearly	26.52%	48
Never	14.92%	27
Total Respondents: 181		

Q10 When was your most recent visit to a Virginia State Park & which park did you visit? (Month & year, Name of park) If this is not applicable, mark N/A.

Answered: 168 Skipped: 18

Q11 How long do you visits to Virginia State Parks typically last?

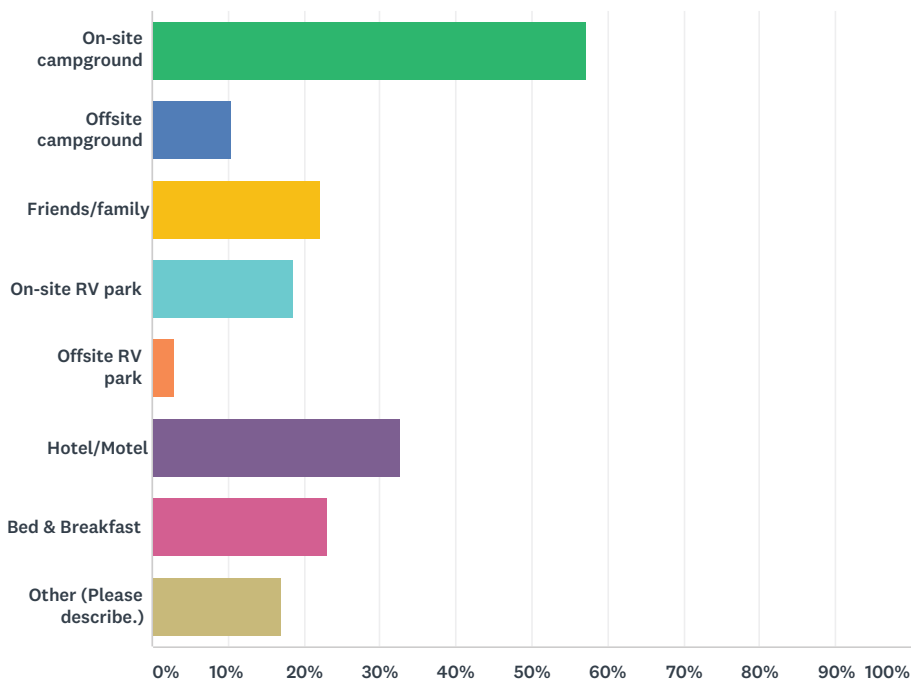
Answered: 167 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
One day or less	69.46%	116
One overnight	15.57%	26
Multiple days and nights	14.97%	25
TOTAL		167

Q12 If you stay overnight, what type of accommodations do you use? (Mark all that apply.)

Answered: 135 Skipped: 51



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
On-site campground	57.04%	77
Offsite campground	10.37%	14
Friends/family	22.22%	30
On-site RV park	18.52%	25
Offsite RV park	2.96%	4
Hotel/Motel	32.59%	44
Bed & Breakfast	22.96%	31
Other (Please describe.)	17.04%	23
Total Respondents: 135		

Q13 Please describe "other" from Q12 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

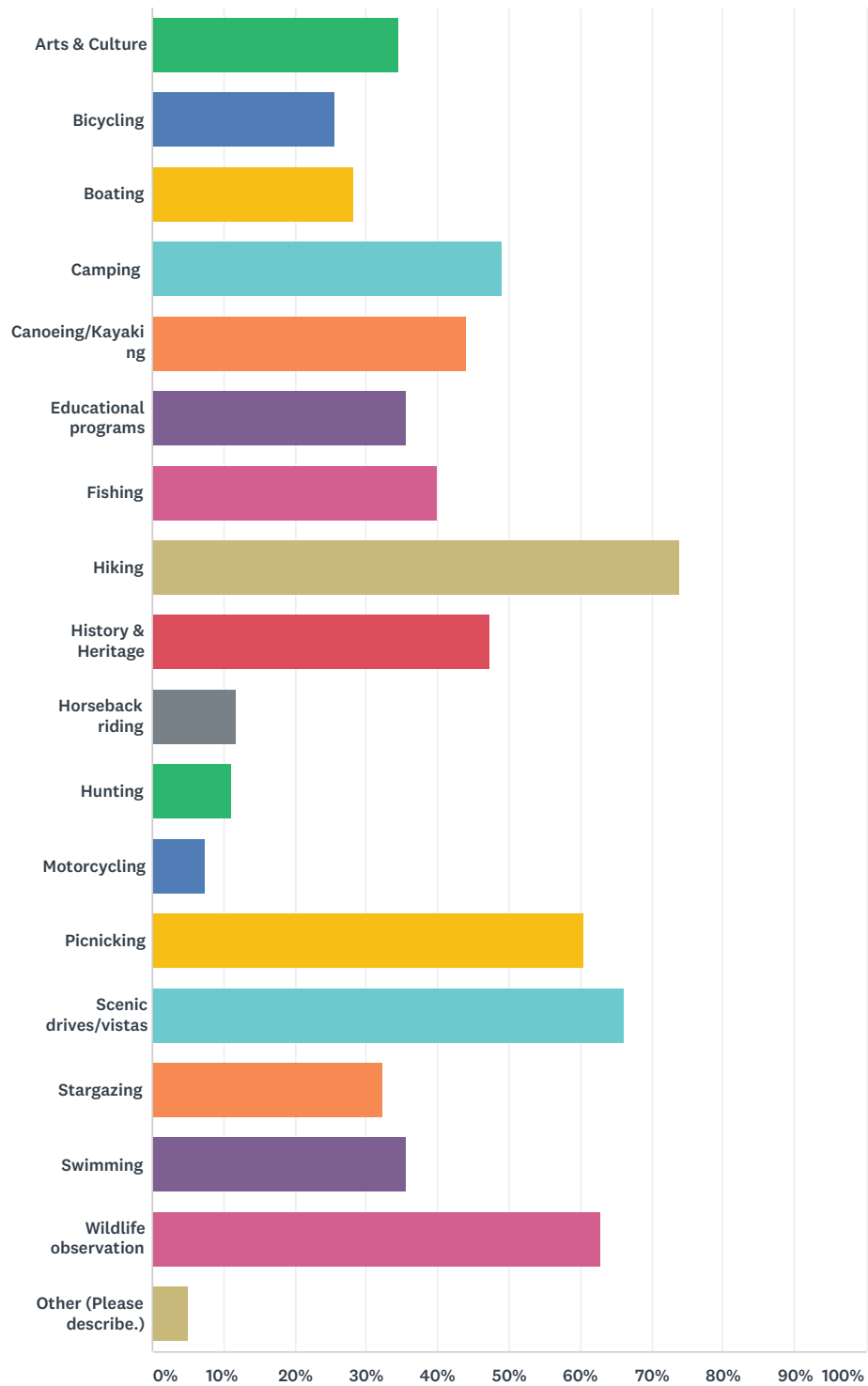
Answered: 118 Skipped: 68

Q14 Which of the following activities are you most likely to participate in at a state park? (Mark all that apply.)

Answered: 180 Skipped: 6

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Arts & Culture

34.44%

62

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey

Bicycling	25.56%	46
Boating	28.33%	51
Camping	48.89%	88
Canoeing/Kayaking	43.89%	79
Educational programs	35.56%	64
Fishing	40.00%	72
Hiking	73.89%	133
History & Heritage	47.22%	85
Horseback riding	11.67%	21
Hunting	11.11%	20
Motorcycling	7.22%	13
Picnicking	60.56%	109
Scenic drives/vistas	66.11%	119
Stargazing	32.22%	58
Swimming	35.56%	64
Wildlife observation	62.78%	113
Other (Please describe.)	5.00%	9
Total Respondents: 180		

Q15 Please describe "other" from Q14 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

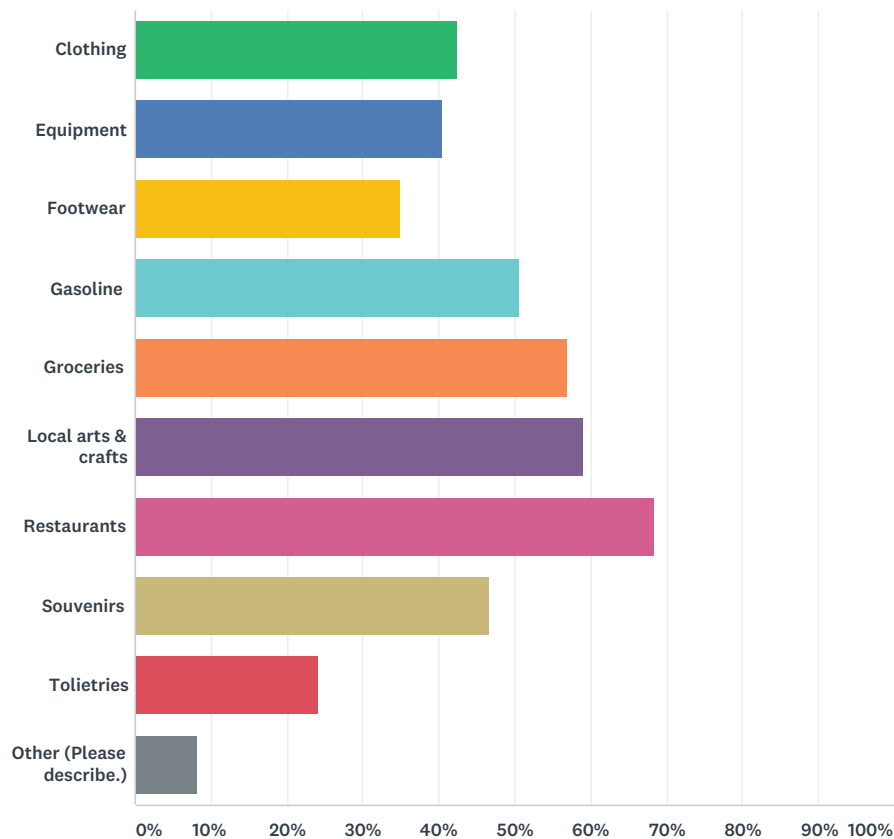
Answered: 123 Skipped: 63

Q16 Has a visit to a state park influenced your purchase of any of the following? (Mark all that apply.)

Answered: 146 Skipped: 40

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey



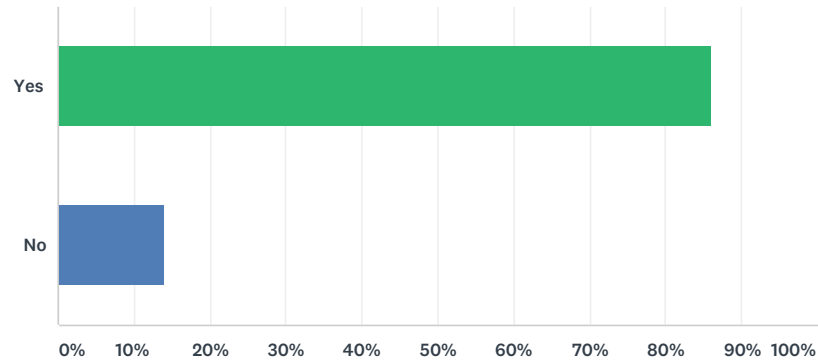
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Clothing	42.47%	62
Equipment	40.41%	59
Footwear	34.93%	51
Gasoline	50.68%	74
Groceries	56.85%	83
Local arts & crafts	58.90%	86
Restaurants	68.49%	100
Souvenirs	46.58%	68
Toiletries	23.97%	35
Other (Please describe.)	8.22%	12
Total Respondents: 146		

Q17 Please describe "other" from Q16 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Answered: 111 Skipped: 75

Q18 When you visit a Virginia State Park, do you visit surrounding communities?

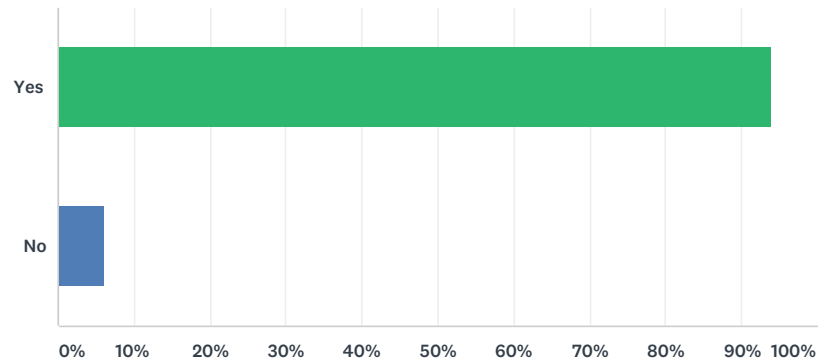
Answered: 171 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	85.96%	147
No	14.04%	24
TOTAL		171

Q21 Would you visit a Virginia State Park in Highland County?

Answered: 180 Skipped: 6



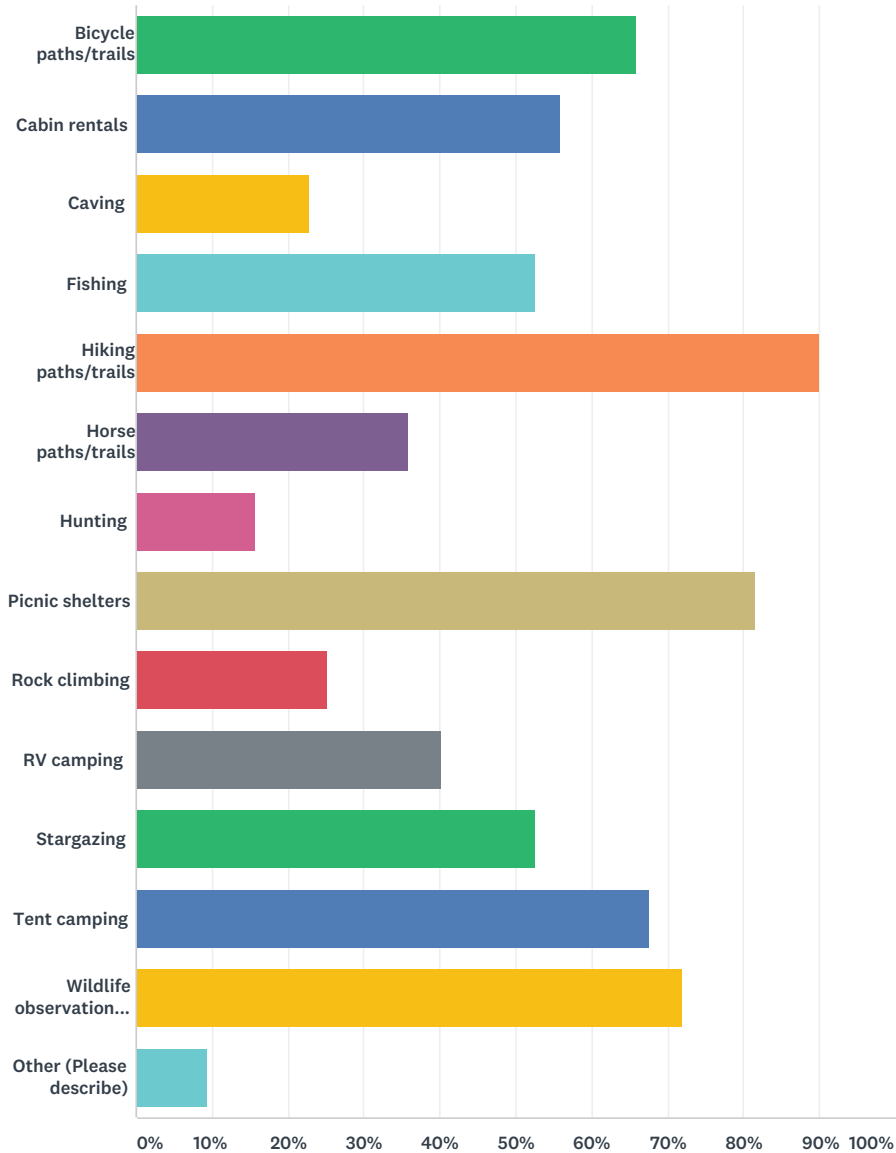
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	93.89%	169
No	6.11%	11
TOTAL		180

Q22 If a Virginia State Park were located in Highland County, which amenities would you most like to see? (Mark all that apply.)

Answered: 179 Skipped: 7

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bicycle paths/trails	65.92%	118
Cabin rentals	55.87%	100
Caving	22.91%	41
Fishing	52.51%	94
Hiking paths/trails	89.94%	161
Horse paths/trails	35.75%	64
Hunting	15.64%	28
Picnic shelters	81.56%	146

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey

Rock climbing	25.14%	45
RV camping	40.22%	72
Stargazing	52.51%	94
Tent camping	67.60%	121
Wildlife observation areas	72.07%	129
Other (Please describe)	9.50%	17
Total Respondents: 179		

Q23 Please describe "other" from Q22 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Answered: 111 Skipped: 75

Q24 Additional Comments

Answered: 64 Skipped: 122

Resident Survey Results: Significant Text Responses

Q3 Please describe your "other" from Q2 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Events Wildflowers Enjoying Riding Walking
Photography

Q5 Please describe "other" from Q4 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Cider Tasting Dining Walking Farming Local Rock
Visiting Photography Scenic Festivals Restaurants
Farmers Market

Q7 Please describe "other" from Q6 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Railroad Museums Going Cass Music Greenbrier
Antiquing Golf Restaurants Activities
Concerts County Skiing Garth Newel

Q23 Please describe "other" from Q22 if applicable. (If this is not applicable, mark N/A.)

Maple Syrup Boating
Educational Programs Signs
Swimming Kayaking History Festivals Highland

Q24 Additional Comments

Answered: 64 Skipped: 122

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	We enthusiastically support the establishment of a state park in Highland County!	4/23/2018 9:34 AM
2	A state park (done well!) is exactly the kind of development Highland County needs.	4/23/2018 9:31 AM
3	I would want to be assured that the state would do an excellent job of maintaining the roads and all facilities associated with the park, and to keep it clean and safe	4/21/2018 8:38 AM
4	While I can see the potential for or benefits of additional tourists and spending at a park in Highland, I am concerned about the demands it would place on the limited public services we have available. Our present law enforcement and emergency service resources are minimal and at best can serve the existing population. I don't feel the county currently has the resources or adequate infrastructure (primary roads, emergency room, hospital, lodging) to accommodate the modern needs or demands of routine crowds of tourists visiting a state park in one of the most remote areas of Virginia.	4/19/2018 4:49 PM
5	None	4/19/2018 9:22 AM
6	Highland is a beautiful place and has a lot of fresh mountain air that should be shared with people who have an appreciation for what we have here.	4/19/2018 9:14 AM
7	Highland County is a perfect area for a State Park	4/18/2018 3:43 PM
8	Currently, there are no RV camping facilities in Highland Co. I would spend more time there and spend money in that Co., if I could stay in my RV a few days, every few months.	4/18/2018 8:03 AM
9	thank you for your interest and work	4/18/2018 7:15 AM
10	Na	4/17/2018 5:53 PM
11	N/A	4/17/2018 5:44 PM
12	I think a national park in highland would bring more tourism and provide more jobs in the community. Both would be good for the area and for the local economy. I would also love to know that the beautiful undeveloped land will be protected. Lots of people don't know where Highland County is so a park would help Virginians and others realize what a beautiful place it is to visit.	4/17/2018 4:07 PM
13	a state park without swimming and boating wouldn't be very useful for me or my friends.	4/17/2018 3:57 PM
14	Highland county needs a park and more visitors	4/17/2018 3:20 PM
15	Highland County would be a wonderful place for a State Park!	4/17/2018 1:40 PM
16	A state park in Highland would be used more by visitors than residents because we already have places we hunt, fish, hike, observe wildlife, etc. For many it is done on their own properties or that of a friend or neighbor..	4/17/2018 1:05 PM
17	A state park in Highland County would be transformational! Most family and friends who visit us are very disappointed that there are no hiking/biking/walking trails in Highland. Having a state park would add a lot more overnight visitors, which would drive demand for more lodging, restaurants, specialty stores, etc., all of which would aid the economic development of the county, AND be in Highland's "sweet spot" of adding even more great agri-tourism options. Thanks for this survey, and for developing a feasibility study!	4/17/2018 12:47 PM
18	Thanks and best wishes	4/17/2018 10:46 AM
19	Based on our experience here in the county, I can't say we would use a park on a regular basis. However, I do believe it would provide a very useful option for visitors. The camping/picnic features I feel would offer amenities that do not exist now (with the exception of a very few picnic tables located along Rt. 250).	4/17/2018 10:39 AM
20	Highland needs to grocery store for visitors	4/17/2018 10:02 AM
21	This would be great!	4/17/2018 9:01 AM

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey

22	Camp ground would be great.	4/17/2018 8:31 AM
23	way to go kids. someone needs to step up and change the mentality of the Monterrey chamber. why on earth did they not buy the land south of Monterrey that was for the housing of the workers from the dam. i tried to do something in 2010 when i owned the Haps Highs restaurant	4/17/2018 8:31 AM
24	N/A	4/17/2018 8:12 AM
25	I grew up in Highland County and wish nothing but the best for all of it's residents. If any county needs a State Park, Highland is the one. It's the perfect place to get away from the busy world.	4/17/2018 7:29 AM
26	I know the public demands "comfort areas" and other facilities in state parks but the finest parks I've seen in America were in the southern Colorado grasslands where there were no facilities, just beauty and nature. I hope you strive for simplicity instead of trying to arrange a multitude of "playthings to entertain your visitors." This constant need for 24 hour "entertainment" has to end sometime.	4/17/2018 2:47 AM
27	State parks are an investment and not an expense.	4/16/2018 11:19 PM
28	Make sure campsites are large and not too close together. Make suggested activities and itineraries for people who have no idea how to have fun without televisions. Make sure fish are easy to catch and plentiful. Great memories for kids and grandparents. Use local hosts to relate their lives in Highland County. the people who live there are the biggest asset.	4/16/2018 11:06 PM
29	Thank you, this was fun!	4/16/2018 10:33 PM
30	Tent camping only would attract me even within my own county.	4/16/2018 9:21 PM
31	Need a campground in Highland County.	4/16/2018 8:14 PM
32	Q19 is duplicative and might be good to say "meals" vs"restaurants"	4/16/2018 7:53 PM
33	Would love to see a State Park in Highland County	4/16/2018 7:52 PM
34	good luck and three cheers for Creigh	4/16/2018 7:50 PM
35	Would love to have a public place in Highland County with camping designed for RV/small trailers	4/16/2018 7:49 PM
36	It would be great to have one.	4/16/2018 7:48 PM
37	Thank you for all you do!	4/16/2018 7:38 PM
38	N/A	4/16/2018 7:02 PM
39	None	4/16/2018 6:27 PM
40	Would love to have a park in Highland!	4/16/2018 6:09 PM
41	I would like to see a Highland County State Park established	4/16/2018 5:59 PM
42	I do not believe many people would use this park.	4/16/2018 5:53 PM
43	None	4/16/2018 5:25 PM
44	A state park in HICO has to offer something special, not generic amenities. What special amenity might we invent that would make it a destination?	4/16/2018 5:22 PM
45	Usually go to WV state parks. They are nicer and cleaner.	4/16/2018 5:21 PM
46	Sure hope Highland gets a state park. Delightful place! A real sweet spot.	4/10/2018 3:10 PM
47	How do you consider farming a recreational activity? Obviously you have never been on a farm. It is a lot of hard work.	4/9/2018 6:00 PM
48	Excellent initiative!	4/9/2018 5:34 PM
49	Disc Golf has become extremely popular across the globe and Highland County would be the perfect place for a course. Elevation changes along with scenery would attract people in the area over and over again to enjoy this low cost sport!	4/9/2018 3:46 PM
50	Having a state park in Highland would be great! It would be so nice to have some hiking trails around. Since most of the property around here is privately owned (I think), I don't know of any public trails in the county. It would be great to have somewhere in Highland that the public could hike. Could definitely increase tourism income as well.	4/9/2018 2:05 PM

Preferences about a Potential Highland County State Park

SurveyMonkey

51	State Park would be a wonderful addition to our community. Wonder if we could power it with alternative energy? Pull from the Dam and add solar?	4/9/2018 12:07 PM
52	Highland has limited lodging for large numbers of visitors and really needs something like a state park to give people somewhere to stay in nature. They come for the nature and the culture.	4/9/2018 10:12 AM
53	A state park is the last thing this dying county needs. It's just one more thing to keep industry out. That would finish off this retirement community and close the school that barely has enough kids in it now to be kept open.	4/9/2018 12:15 AM
54	None	4/8/2018 9:56 PM
55	Na	4/8/2018 9:43 PM
56	Thanks for doing this...would love to see more parks nearby	4/8/2018 9:42 PM
57	Highland County does NOT need a state park!!	4/8/2018 8:59 PM
58	N/A	4/8/2018 8:48 PM
59	Love highland the way it is would not want to see cabin rentals etc just untouched nature	4/8/2018 8:45 PM
60	NA	4/8/2018 8:34 PM
61	None	4/8/2018 8:27 PM
62	None	4/8/2018 8:25 PM
63	Highland desperately needs any type of economical boost!! We are becoming a ghost town.	4/8/2018 8:22 PM
64	Highland needs HELP !!!	4/8/2018 8:06 PM

Appendix B: Economic Impact Analysis

As Highland County lacks a state park or other comparable outdoor recreation facility, average visitation and spending published for all operational Virginia State parks were used to approximate components of the model. An explanation of the estimations used in Section A is found below. Sections B and C were estimated using existing Virginia Tourism Corporation estimates to create a more conservative model.

Line 1: Estimated nonlocal visitors

DCR only publishes the type of visit (i.e. day use or overnight) and not the type of visitor (i.e. local or non-local), the estimated number of non-local visits was excluded in this model.

Line 2: Estimated local visits

The average visitation across all operational Virginia State parks was used to estimate the visitation rate for a potential park in Highland County. As visitation rates and factors for visitation range widely across the state, an average of the entire system was deemed a better predictor than selecting a single park planning district. This was done to minimize biases in the data.

Line 3: Estimated expenditures per use

Similarly to Line 2, the estimated expenditure per use was approximated by using an average across reported average spending by visitors in Virginia State parks. Again, this was done to address the differences in park admission and relative costs for recreation (e.g. camping, boating, etc.).

Line 4: Total visitor spending

An average of total visitor spending for all Virginia State parks was used to approximate total visitor spending.

MONEY GENERATING MODEL

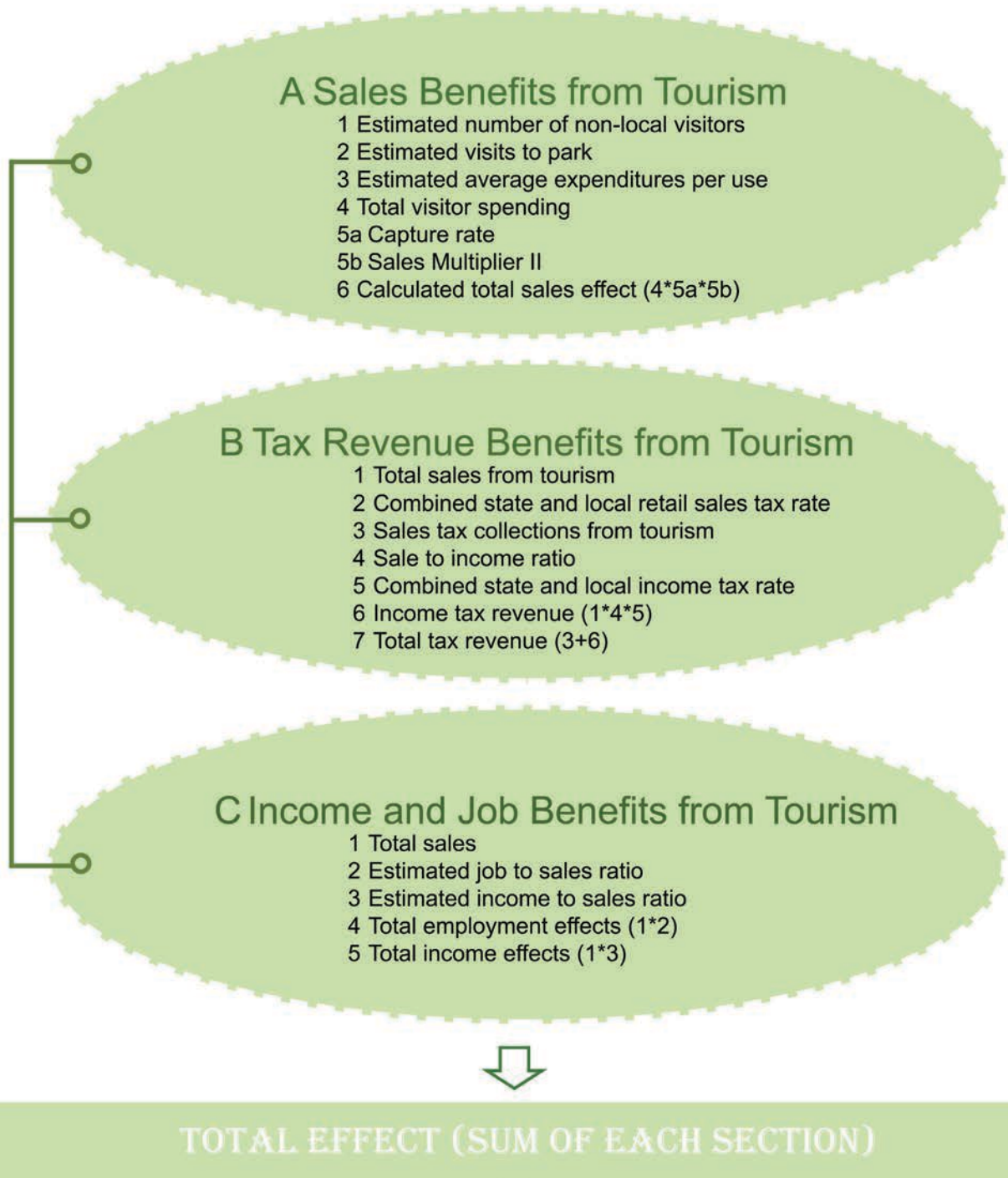


Fig. B1: Money Generating Model worksheet.

Economic Impact Analysis Worksheet

A	Sales Benefits from Tourism	Estimate for Highland County
1	<i>Estimated Non-local visitors</i>	---
2	<i>Estimated visits to park</i>	287,429
3	<i>Estimated average expenditures per use</i>	\$22.68
4	<i>Total visitor spending</i>	\$6,519,355.53
5a	<i>Capture Rate</i>	52%
5b	<i>Sales Multiplier II</i>	1.243
6	<i>Calculated total sales effect (4*5a*5b)</i>	\$4,204,575.61
B	Tax Revenue Benefits from Tourism	\$1,429,099.00
C	Income and Job Benefits from Tourism	\$3,684,439.00
	Total	\$9,318,113.61

Fig. B2: Complete Money Generating Model worksheet.

Line 5a: Sales capture rate

To approximate the sales capture rate, an average capture rate taken from across Virginia State parks was used. This was calculated by finding the average percentage of paying visitors who visited Virginia State parks in 2017 and applying it to the model. By nature, such an approach will have conservative outcomes as non-paying park visitors likely still purchase local goods, food, or services during their trip.

Line 5b: Sales Multiplier II

Line A.5b was estimated using IMPLAN multiplier data supplied by the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia. These multipliers estimate how much money is generated by the expenditure of \$1.00 in any particular section. To estimate the impact of “tourism”, an average of total value added multipliers for the following sectors were used:

- Retail—food and beverage stores;
- Retail—gasoline stores;
- Retail—clothing and clothing accessories stores;
- Retail—general merchandise stores;
- Retail—miscellaneous store retailers;
- Retail—non-store retailers;
- Full-service restaurants;
- Limited-service restaurants;
- All other food and drinking places; and
- Hotels and motels, including casino hotels.

These sectors were those most likely to receive spending by visitors in Highland county and which had multiplier data available.

Line 6: Calculated total sales effect

The final calculated total sales effect is produced by multiplying the estimated expenditures per use by the capture rate and the sales multiplier (Line 4*5a*5b). This value is ultimately summed with the calculated tax revenue and employment benefits of tourism.