Virginia Outdoors Plan

- Produced every 5 years since 1966
- Budget for the 2018 plan was $328,000
- The plan takes 2 years to develop
- First step - Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey (VODS)
2017 Survey Summary

- Natural areas, parks, trails, and access to waterways remain among the top recreational needs in Virginia
- Increased participation in freshwater fishing and paddle sports
- Increased visitation to natural areas and preserves
- Strong support (74%) for public funding for outdoor recreation
- Importance of scenic resources in travel planning
- The full survey: https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop
2017 Public Opinions about Recreation

70%  Very Important to have access to outdoor recreation opportunities

96%  Important to protect Virginia’s natural and open space resources

74%  Support state funding for outdoor recreation; 44% of those support an increase in funding

66%  Support public spending to prevent the loss of natural areas and open spaces
### Most popular activities for the 2018 VOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting natural areas, preserves, refuges</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving for Pleasure</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking for pleasure</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting parks (local, state, national)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming/ outdoor pool</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunbathing/ relaxing on a beach</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing the water</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming—beach/ lake/ river</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting historic areas</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshwater fishing</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Citizens' view of most needed outdoor recreation facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Needed Facilities</th>
<th>% of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water access</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic areas</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic drives (driving for pleasure)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing fields, sports and golf facilities</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What more than a decade of surveys show us

- Recreation trends are remaining fairly consistent.
- Having access to outdoor recreation is on the rise, from the 2006 survey to now there has been an 11 percent increase in public support for more recreation opportunities.
- Protecting natural areas and open space remains equally as important, staying in the 90 percentile.
- Access to trails, water, parks, natural areas and scenic views remain the top activities.
ConserveVirginia

- Conversations and Research resulted in use and/or production of 19 maps or data models.
- 19 were cross-referenced and consolidated into 6 categories

Agriculture & Forestry

Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity

Floodplains & Flooding Resilience

Cultural & Historic Preservation

Scenic Preservation

Protected Landscapes Resilience
The results in acres of these 6 categories

Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity (3,926,390 acres)
Agriculture & Forestry (1,432,429 acres)
Cultural and Historic Preservation (1,147,336 acres)
Protected Landscapes Resilience (627,991 acres)
Floodplains & Flooding Resilience (545,461 acres)
Scenic Preservation (270,870 acres)

6,327,922 acres
ConserveVirginia on Natural Heritage Data Explorer (NHDE)

Welcome to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Natural Heritage Data Explorer

This site provides interactive access to various map data representing Natural Heritage resources and other conservation values in Virginia.

ConserveVirginia, Virginia’s statewide land conservation plan, is now available here.

This site should be viewed in Firefox version 3.6 or higher, Google Chrome, or Safari version 3 or higher, or Internet Explorer 10 or higher.

Open Access: You do not need to register for use, nor log in, if you are interested in using the site for land use planning or conservation planning. Anyone can freely view and create maps of conservation status and conservation values, by clicking the “Map” tab above. Click the “Species/Communities Search” tab to search our database and create summaries of Natural Heritage Resources (i.e. rare species populations and natural communities) by conservation status ranks, counties, watersheds, and other descriptors.
2019 Grant Rounds
Recreational Trails Program &
the Land and Water Conservation Fund
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
Division of Planning & Recreation Resources
Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

- Held an *acquisition-only* grant round
- Received 9 applications, top 7 applications were recommended for funding through the LWCF committee
- If approved by the National Park Service, 2019 projects will total $4.42 million dollars in funding

*Next Anticipated Grant Round: Spring 2020*

*(Anticipated Apportionment: $3,800,00.00)*
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

- RTP requires that 30% of funding supports non-motorized trails, 30% to motorized trails, and 40% to diversified/multiuse trails.
- DCR received 30 applications in 2019
  - 3 non-motorized, 2 diversified, and 4 motorized projects were recommended for funding through the RTP committee.
  - DCR grants staff are currently processing agreements to request these applications be approved through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- If approved by the FHWA, 2019 projects will total $3.39 million dollars in funding

Next Anticipated Grant Round: Fall 2020
(Anticipated Apportionment: $1,500,00.00)
Virginia Land Conservation Foundation & Fund Grants

- The foundation manages the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, which gets funding from the state's annual budget.
- An Interagency Taskforce reviews and recommends grant applications to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation.
- There are four application categories, and each has a particular set of criteria.
  - Open Spaces and Parks
  - Natural Area Protection
  - Historic Area Preservation
  - Farmlands and Forest Preservation

The 2019 grant round closed in August
State Trails Advisory Committee

- Established by House Bill 1542 in 2015
- Addressed specific tasks outlined by the General Assembly
- Provided recommendations in the Trails Chapter of the 2018 VOP
- Legislation sunsets in Jan 2021

Virginia Trails Alliance

- An outgrowth of the STAC
- Formed in November 2018
- Formed as an umbrella group to advocate for trails (+/-38 member organizations)
- No dues or member fees
- Has sent several letters to Governor Northam and his staff and/or the legislature
• DCR has 33 river segments scenically designated.
• As part of the 50th celebration, 10 requests for designation assessment have been made to DCR.
• The River Management Society Symposium is in Richmond on May 12-15, 2020.
• Visit the website at: https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/sr50
Region 15 State Parks

State Park Master Plan updates

- Powhatan 2022
- Pocahontas 2027
Other State Agency Initiatives
MOU for Cooperative Action—Public Access

- Establishes coordination between DCR, DGIF, and VDOT
- Purpose: ID opportunities for access at bridge crossings and road endings
- Clarifies roles
- Established 1981; updated 2015
VDOT has developed two websites that focus on bike travel

- Bicycle Facility Inventory
  https://www.virginiaroads.org/datasets/bicycle-facility-inventory-view/data?selectedAttribute=Lane_Miles

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts
  https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?useExisting=1&layers=9f56a169771746dcb18b6e0ba88f3fbe
Virginia Department of Forestry

- VDOF owns:
  - 25 State Forests totaling 69,441 acres
  - 181 easements covering 58,426 acres

  - State Forests are self-supported through the sale of forest products and use permits.
  - Properties are open to the public for outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing and canoeing.
DGIF works to ensure that all Virginians have the opportunity to appreciate outdoor recreation by enhancing fish and wildlife resources while providing opportunities to pursue those activities in a safe manner.

• Maintains 44 Wildlife Management Areas and over 225,000 acres of public access
• 154 Lakes Owned and/or Managed
• 121 Accessible water facilities with 182 Boat Ramps
• 650 Bird and Wildlife Locations
• Newly Established Elk Population
ADVENTURE TOURISM MANUFACTURING

- Initiative led Virginia Tourism Corporation to recruit manufacturers of adventure tourism products to locate and expand to the Commonwealth
- Targeted product sectors include kayaks, canoes, ATVs, and outdoor gear
- Initiative seeks to grow Virginia’s outdoor culture while spurring job creation and tourism partnerships
The Office of Outdoor Recreation

- Leads efforts to support outdoor recreation through attracting outdoor equipment industries
- Recruits new outdoor businesses to the Commonwealth
- The Office will lead an effort to grow the outdoor industry in Virginia through industry promotion, coordination, and recruitment
The VOP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The 2019 spring TAC meeting

- Review the survey results from 2017
- The results informed the next VOP direction
- Three topics were addressed in the break-out sessions
  - Recreation trends
  - Legislative engagement for recreation
  - VOP future priorities
Recreation Trends

• Technology Integration
  o Mapping
  o Drones
  o Geocaching

• Glamping
  o Trailers
  o RVS
  o Yurts

• Sports Tourism
  o Extreme Sports
  o Marathons and Bike Races
Promoting Recreation to Legislatures

- Ecosystem Services
  - Flood Protection/resiliency
  - How land conservation dovetails with recreation
  - How open space/recreation/land con supports economics

- Legislative engagement
  - Invite them to see what’s happening around the State
  - Submit case studies that shows the economic value to communities
Next VOP Priorities

• Build a case for Maintenance Funding for stewardship and infrastructure
  o Creating a dedicated regular source of a maintenance fund
  o Discuss the real costs of facility development (long-term maintenance and operations)
  o Emphasize deferred maintenance and the need for sustained funding

• Build a strong argument for the economic value of outdoor recreation
  o Detail the return on investment/cost-benefit
Visit the Virginia Outdoors Plan at:

www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/vop.shtml

Thank you!