

Russell Fork Scenic River Report Dickenson County



Prepared By

Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources

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I. REASON FOR THE STUDY

The Russell Fork Scenic River study in Dickenson County was undertaken at the request of the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors. A letter to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) indicated their interest in possible designation of the entire river and requested that DCR evaluate it to determine if it qualifies for inclusion into the Virginia Scenic Rivers System. Upon further discussion, the focus became the section from the Splashdam railroad crossing to the Kentucky line.

The Scenic Rivers Act, found in Title 10.1, Chapter 4, Sections 10.1-400 through 10.1-418.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, was enacted in 1970 as a means of protecting the Commonwealth's scenic rivers and their immediate environs. In order to be eligible for Scenic River designation, a river, or section thereof, must contain substantial natural, scenic, recreational and historical attributes. At the request of the locality, DCR does an evaluation and writes a report documenting these attributes. Since the passage of the Act, twenty-four (24) river segments, totaling over 529 miles, have received Scenic River designation by the General Assembly.

A. Benefits of Designation

The Virginia Scenic River designation accomplishes the following:

- it requires the Federal Energy Commission (FERC) to consider the impact of proposed hydropower or related projects on a designated Scenic River using the Scenic River report developed in the qualification process,
- it requires all state agencies to consider visual, natural and recreational values of a Scenic River in their planning and permitting process (Section 10.1-402),
- it gives riparian landowners, local citizens and local governments a greater voice in the planning and implementation of federal and state projects that might affect the river (Section 10.1-406),
- it requires authorization by the General Assembly for the construction, operation and/or maintenance of any structure, such as a dam, that will impede the natural flow of a Scenic River (Section 10.1-407), and
- it allows riparian landowners to continue using their land as they did before designation, except for the Section 10.1-407 provision noted above (Section 10.1-408).

B. Designation Process

Scenic river evaluations involve a map survey, a related literature review and a field study to validate existing land use information and rank the river according to relative uniqueness or quality. Evaluations for each river or river segment take into consideration twelve (12) different established factors or criteria, which provide a uniform gauge for all river studies. Field evaluations include physically canoeing or boating the stretch of river being evaluated and rating the characteristics of the resource. The evaluation criteria are: River Corridor Vegetation, Riverbed and/or River Flow Modifications, Human Development of Visual Corridor, Historic Features, Landscape, Quality of Fishery, Special Natural Fauna, Water Quality, Parallel Roads, Crossings, and Special Features

Affecting River Aesthetics. A summary of the evaluation results is included in Section IV. Environmental Analysis.

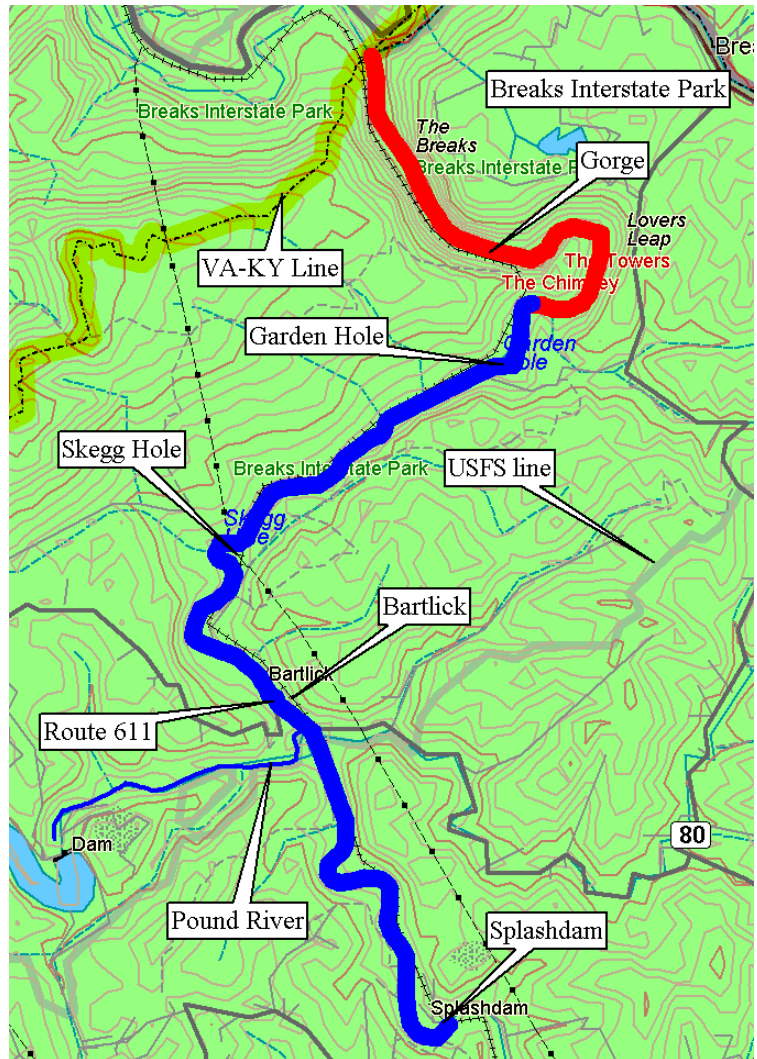
The Act instructs the DCR to conduct "studies of rivers or sections of rivers to be considered for designation" and to "recommend to the Governor and to the General Assembly rivers or sections thereof to be considered for designation as scenic rivers." This report is a fulfillment of this statutory directive.

II. SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

At the request of Dickenson County, DCR was asked to focus on evaluating the Russell Fork River from the railroad crossing at the community of Splashdam to the Kentucky-Virginia line, a distance of about nine (9) miles. As a result of the study, the evaluated section, shown on the following map, meets the criteria for designation. DCR therefore recommends the designation of the Russell Fork River in Dickenson County as a designated Virginia Scenic River from the Splashdam railroad crossing to the Kentucky line, a distance of approximately 9 miles. It further recommends that DCR be the administering agency.

III. CORRIDOR STUDY MAP

The Russell Fork River in Dickenson County generally flows in a northerly direction combining with the Pound River at the community of Bartlick and continuing through Breaks Interstate Park before entering Kentucky. This report will discuss the river segment proposed for designation from the Splashdam railroad crossing to the Kentucky line. This map shows the Gorge section of the river, key locations along the river, and the topography of the area around the river. Note that this map is not to scale.



IV. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

In order to determine whether the Russell Fork River, or any part thereof, was eligible for Scenic River designation, personnel from the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Division of Planning and Recreation Resources (PRR) undertook an analysis of the proposed river corridor. Staff gathered information from sister agencies on the attributes of the corridor and then, along with interested citizens, conducted a field investigation on June 25 and 26, 2009. Following is a description of the qualities and conditions of the resource that makes this section of the Russell Fork a candidate for the Virginia Scenic Rivers System.

In 1984, DCR conducted a study of the Russell Fork River within Breaks Interstate Park and found it to qualify for designation. Although designation was not pursued at that time, the qualities that enabled it to be eligible for designation are still present along that section of the river. Many of those attributes are also found along the extended river section studied for this report and allow DCR to recommend the river section for designation.

A. River Corridor Vegetation

The Russell Fork River charges through a mixed deciduous and hemlock-forested corridor accented by tall cliffs and occasional cobble and sand bars. At the upper elevations of the jagged cliffs of the gorge, the forests are predominantly evergreens. There is no evidence of agriculture along the corridor and ancient quarrying has long been overgrown. A very few short sections have narrow buffers due to parallel railroad tracks or a road.



1 Vegetated sand bar with mixed forests on the steep banks beyond

The vegetation along the corridor provides visually interest with a variety of forms, textures, sizes and colors. This diversity provides year-round changes in the cover and the views from and along the river.

B. Riverbed and/or River Flow Modifications

The only river flow modification in this section is under the bridge of Route 611 in Bartlick. The riverbed modification is a splash dam, which is a dam built to hold logs floated down from timbering sites upstream until there were enough logs to transport downstream to market when the river conditions were appropriate. Wooden supports secured in the dam held the logs while letting most of the water through. When the conditions were right, the wooden structure was blown and the logs were then hurtled downstream to waiting sawmills and markets. The splash dam was in place when timbering was a major industry in the area. Once the splash dam was out of use, a section was breached to provide for safe boat passage; thus there is virtually no impoundment of the river. There were not any fallen trees creating blockages or hazards along the study section and there is no channelization.



2 The only river modification the splash dam at Bartlick; notice the breached dam section.

C. Human Development of Visual Corridor

The Russell Fork River corridor is essentially devoid of human development. Just below Bartlick, there is a clustered community of four houses evident from the river. These are the only buildings that are visible along the entire corridor. The only other visible developments are the bridge and the wire crossings addressed in Section J. Crossings.

D. Historic Features

There are only a few sites documented by the Department of Historic Resources along this stretch of the Russell Fork. The sites are either not fully studied or not of state or national significance. The valley is, however, rich with coal mining and timbering history and once had a large population. Some of these undocumented sites include the splash dam, abandoned communities, and the train infrastructure that provided access and transportation for workers, goods and services to these remote areas.



3 Skegg Tunnel – railroad bridge with pedestrian walkway for miners to get to work

E. Landscape

The Russell Fork River flows north from its headwaters in the Cumberland Plateau on the west face of Big A Mountain near the Russell County/Buchanan County line. During the area's heyday, rugged topography kept most development along river corridors. These abandoned areas are now reverting to forests. Forests hang over some of the calm areas of the river, while the banks shoot skyward, creating Class V rapids. The range of experiences is framed by these two extremes. The twisting and turning of the river coupled with the sheer cliffs and graceful worn mountains provide a variety of experiences and views both up to the sky and down the river.



4 Typical rock faces as seen from the river



5 Nearby, the mist off the river highlights the gorge Towers and shields them from the river

The landscape is very diverse with striking extremes in topography, varied river sections and unique boulders and landform features. The breadth of views ranges from a tight, closed-in corridor to open vistas. Dam releases and weather pattern shifts add to the uniqueness of this landscape.

F. Quality of Fishery

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) provided data on the fish habitats in the river study area, and these qualities received minimal scores. Although the influx of the cold waters from Flannagan Lake add great clarity to the river and is the largest tail-water trout fishery in southwest Virginia, the upper watershed impacts still limit the diversity and water quality of the watershed. DGIF stocks trout in the Russell Fork River below Haysi and the Pound River as part of their catchable trout program.

G. Special Natural Fauna

A number of factors along the Russell Fork River create an environment that supports a diversity of plants and wildlife. The presence of water, the geology of the area, the rural landscape and the edges created by the juxtaposition of land uses contribute to this diversity. The public values these attributes and have a heightened interest in protecting the river corridor.

The Natural Heritage Program of the DCR identifies areas that have a biodiversity significance ranking based on the rarity, quality, and number of element occurrences they contain. There is a concentration of significant natural heritage resources along the Russell Fork from its confluence with the Pound River downstream, including: Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis* G2,S1,LE,LE), Roundleaf Catchfly (*Silene rotundifolia* G4, S2), Freshwater Cordgrass (*Spartina Pectinata* G5, S2), Virginia Spiraea (*Spiraea virginiana* G2, S1, LT, LE), Big Sandy Crayfish (*Cambarus veteranus* G1, S2, LE) Rocky Bar and Shore (community G4, SNR), Six-banded Longhorn Beetle (*Dryobius sexnotatus*, GNR, S1S3), Brown Supercoil (*Paravitrea septadens*, G1, S1, LT, SOC), Shining Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes lucida*, G5,S1), and Freshwater Cordgrass (*Spartina pectinata*, G5, S2).

It should be noted that this segment of the Russell Fork is also designated by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as a "Threatened and Endangered Species Water" for the Variegate darter (*Etheostoma variatum*).

These unique and endangered species provided the maximum additional points in the scoring of this river section.

H. Water Quality

The water quality above the confluence with the Pound River is fair due to the upstream impacts from mining, stripped mountainsides and poor buffers. There was a lot of trash in the low hanging branches and weeds along the riverbanks that local citizens continue to address in weekend clean-up efforts. The water quality for the Russell Fork River from the Pound River confluence downstream is good with no impairments. Bacteria levels have steadily declined in this segment and none have exceeded Virginia's Water Quality

Standards since June 2006. The Russell Fork fully supports some aquatic life, wildlife, and recreation uses.

I. Parallel Roads

There are several miles of parallel roads or railroads along the corridor. Fortunately, these parallel roads and tracks are invisible to the river traveler because of the tall tree cover and the location of the rail bed at a higher elevation making the impact virtually insignificant. Considering these factors, this criterion received a moderate score.



6 Railroad crossing and parallel rail at Skegg Hole

J. Crossings

There are only two crossings along the 9-mile length of the study area. One is a railroad bridge with parallel power lines that crosses at Skegg Hole. The railroad bridge has decking for workers of the area to use to get to the coal mines on the other side of the river. Although the metal decking is in good shape, no one uses it now. The second crossing is a road bridge for Route 611 at Bartlick just below the Pound River confluence. The meandering of the river limits the visual impacts of these crossings, thus the score for this criterion is moderately high.



7 Route 611, a scenic byway, at Bartlick

K. Special Features Affecting the Aesthetics

The Russell River is an exciting and enticing river with majestic cliffs, tranquil intimate sections and roaring thunderous rapids. All these special features combine to create an interesting and aesthetic experience for those interested in seeing and experiencing such a variety of natural features. The gradient change for the river starts out gradually with an average drop of forty (40) feet per mile. In the last three miles, the drop increases to 145 feet per mile through the gorge creating very challenging Class IV and V rapids.

A few islands, rock formations, gravel bars, riffles, and Class I and II rapids dominate the river from Splashdam to the confluence with the Pound River, adding interest and challenges for river travelers. Some of the sections are narrow enough for overhanging trees to touch.

Nevertheless, most of the corridor is open to the sky allowing for views of the tall mountains on either side. The tallest towers in the gorge are over 600 feet high and are visible from several locations up and along the river. The river corridor itself contains several large and small bends creating interesting visual perspectives and the anticipation of discovering what views or experiences may be ‘just around the bend.’



8 Riffles turn into rapids passing boulders and islands through the gorge

V. LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

Land use in the study corridor is primarily forested with one very small residential community. From the Pound River confluence downstream most of the land on both sides are owned by public entities – either Breaks Interstate Park or George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. The National Forest (NF) manages several sites along this corridor as NF Special Biological Areas due to the unique natural heritage resources in the corridor. These include Chimney Cliffs and Russell Fork, Upper Skegg Spur, Skegg Woodlands, and Skegg Branch Bottomland. Above

the confluence with the Pound River and the NF boundary, the land bordering the river is in private ownership. There are not specific plans for any development along the corridor. Plans exist to extend or build new trails along the corridor and to develop a park at Splashdam. The Dickenson County Comprehensive Plan maintains the area in agriculture. Much of the corridor has slopes in excess of 20%, which according to the comprehensive plan, is unsuitable for urban-type development. Therefore, the county plans for only dispersed development along the river corridor.



9 Rafting is a popular activity on the Russell Fork River

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Conservation and Recreation concludes that the Russell Fork River in Dickenson County from the Splashdam railroad crossing to the Kentucky line, a distance of approximately nine (9) miles qualifies for inclusion in the Virginia Scenic River System. Scenic River Designation is warranted because of the aesthetic and recreational qualities of the river section, its environs, the unique flora and fauna and its historic setting.

Flowing through largely forested land, this river segment possesses a number of interesting aesthetic features including majestic rock cliffs and boulder fields, islands, rapids ranging from Class I to Class V, existing and proposed adjacent trails, and a twisting and turning alignment with magnificent views of the mountains and majestic cliffs. The adjacent landscape has few manmade features and consists of interesting natural resources with variations in terrain and vegetation, all of which reinforce its sense of remoteness.

This section of the Russell Fork River has cold waters with low water quality due to upstream siltation and pollution. The presence of unique flora and fauna along the Russell Fork River adds much to the value of this corridor as a Scenic River. There are no historical sites listed on the Department of Historic Resources database, however, there are many coal mining related sites along the corridor. Trains still traverse the river corridor hauling coal from the mountains to market.

Considering all aspects of the Russell Fork River section in Dickenson County, DCR recommends it for Virginia Scenic River designation.

It is recommended that:

1. The Russell Fork from the Splashdam railroad crossing to the Virginia/Kentucky line, a distance of approximately nine (9) miles in Dickenson County, be recommended for Virginia Scenic River Designation;
2. The Department of Conservation and Recreation should be appointed the Administering Agency.

VII. CONSERVATION PLAN

There is a variety of elements to the conservation plan for the Russell Fork River. These elements call for a minimum effort and specific actions on the part of the General Assembly, local and state units of government and individual and riparian landowners.

Breaks Interstate Park, along with George Washington and Jefferson National Forest and its Special Biological Areas of Chimney Cliffs and Russell Fork, Upper Skegg Spur, Skegg Woodlands, and Skegg Branch Bottomland, provide much protection along the stretch of the Russell Fork River corridor below its confluence with the Pound River. Multiple agencies, organizations and individuals have great interest in protecting the river corridor due to its unique flora and fauna.

Legislation establishing Virginia Scenic River designation for the section of the Russell Fork River under consideration is the first element that must be implemented. In addition to clearly expressing the policy intent of the Commonwealth with regard to protection and conservation of the river, designation will focus attention on the river as a natural resource of statewide significance. The increased attention will help ensure a greater scrutiny of plans or proposals that have the potential to significantly alter or destroy those resource qualities that make the river worthy of designation. The Virginia Scenic River Advisory Board will give local residents an avenue for formal input into decisions that would impact the river.

A second element of the Conservation Plan involves Dickenson County's land use plans, which should reflect citizens' recognition, appreciation and concern for the river and the valuable role it plays in their community's quality of life. Such plans should be aimed in part at protecting the river and its environs from potential development, or at least make sure that the development that does occur utilizes low impact development strategies as much as possible.

The final element of the Conservation Plan is the continued individual stewardship of local and riparian landowners. If not for this good attention and care over the years, the river might not still possess the necessary characteristics for inclusion in the Virginia Scenic River System. Through continued stewardship efforts, the scenic and natural character of the river can be protected.

Action by the General Assembly to designate the section of the Russell Fork River and carefully coordinated efforts of Dickenson County should combine to protect the natural and scenic qualities of the recommended section of the Russell Fork River for the enjoyment of future generations. Proposed Legislation is provided in the Appendix.

VIII. ANTICIPATED COST OF DESIGNATION

The only anticipated direct costs as a result of the designation will be those incurred by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) as a result of its duties as administrator of the river. At present, these costs are estimated to be in the range of \$1,000 per year.

IX. AGENCY COMMENTS/RESOLUTIONS

A draft report was circulated for review among the DCR Divisions, other state agencies, Dickenson County and Friends of the Russell Fork. Their comments and any support documents are included in the Appendix of this report.

- X. APPENDIX**
 - A. Species Ranking definitions of DCR Natural Heritage
 - B. Letters and other comment and support documents
 - C. Proposed Legislation

A. Species Ranking definitions of DCR Natural Heritage

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Global Rank | State Rank | Federal Status | State Status | FWS SOC |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|--------------|---------|
| <i>Silene rotundifolia</i> | Roundleaf Catchfly | G4 | S2 | | | |
| | Six-banded Longhorn | | | | | |
| <i>Dryobius sexnotatus</i> | Beetle | GNR | S1S3 | | | |
| <i>Paravitrea septadens</i> | Brown Supercoil | G1 | S1 | | LT | SOC |
| <i>Spiranthes lucida</i> | Shining Ladies'-tresses | G5 | S1 | | | |
| Rocky Bar / Shore | Rocky Bar / Shore | G4 | SNR | | | |
| <i>Spartina pectinata</i> | Freshwater Cordgrass | G5 | S2 | | | |
| <i>Myotis sodalis</i> | Indiana Bat | G2 | S1 | LE | LE | |
| <i>Spiraea virginiana</i> | Virginia Spiraea | G2 | S1 | LT | LE | |
| <i>Cambarus veteranus</i> | Big Sandy crayfish | G3 | S1S2 | | LE | |

HISTORIC RECORDS

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|----|--|----|----|
| A Millipede | <i>Cherokia georgiana latassa</i> | G4TNR | S1 | | | |
| <i>Chelone obliqua</i> | Red Turtlehead | G4 | S1 | | NL | NL |
| <i>Cardamine flagellifera</i> | Bittercress | G3 | S1 | | NL | NL |

Definitions of Abbreviations used on Natural Heritage Resource Lists

The following ranks are used by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to set protection priorities for natural heritage resources. Natural Heritage Resources, or "NHR's," are rare plant and animal species, rare and exemplary natural communities, and significant geologic features. The criterion for ranking NHR's is the number of populations or occurrences, i.e. the number of known distinct localities; the number of individuals in existence at each locality or, if a highly mobile organism (e.g., sea turtles, many birds, and butterflies), the total number of individuals; the quality of the occurrences, the number of protected occurrences; and threats.

- **S1** - Critically imperiled in the state because of extreme rarity or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the state. Typically 5 or fewer populations or occurrences; or very few remaining individuals (<1000).
- **S2** - Imperiled in the state because of rarity or because of some factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state. Typically 6 to 20 populations or occurrences or few remaining individuals (1,000 to 3,000).
- **S3** - Vulnerable in the state either because rare and uncommon, or found only in a restricted range (even if abundant at some locations), or because of other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation. Typically 21 to 100 populations or occurrences (1,000 to 3,000).
- **S4** - Apparently secure; Uncommon but not rare, and usually widespread in the state. Possible cause of long-term concern. Usually >100 populations or occurrences and more than 10,000 individuals.
- **S5** - Secure; Common, widespread and abundant in the state. Essentially ineradicable under present conditions. Typically with considerably more than 100 populations or occurrences and more than 10,000 individuals.

- **S#B** - Breeding status of an animal within the state
- **S#N** - Non-breeding status of animal within the state. Usually applied to winter resident species.
- **S#?** - Inexact or uncertain numeric rank.
- **SH** - Possibly extirpated (Historical). Historically known from the state, but not verified for an extended period, usually > 15 years; this rank is used primarily when inventory has been attempted recently.
- **S#S#** - Range rank; A numeric range rank, (e.g. S2S3) is used to indicate the range of uncertainty about the exact status of the element. Ranges cannot skip more than one rank.
- **SU** - Unrankable; Currently unrankable due to lack of information or due to substantially conflicting information about status or trends.
- **SNR** - Unranked; state rank not yet assessed.
- **SX** - Presumed extirpated from the state. Not located despite intensive searches of historical sites and other appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered.
- **SNA** - A conservation status rank is not applicable because the element is not a suitable target for conservation activities.

Global Ranks are similar, but refer to a species' rarity throughout its total range. Global ranks are denoted with a "G" followed by a character. Note GX means the element is presumed extinct throughout its range, not relocated despite intensive searches of historical sites/appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered. A "Q" in a rank indicates that a taxonomic question concerning that species exists. Ranks for subspecies are denoted with a "T". The global and state ranks combined (e.g. G2/S1) give an instant grasp of a species' known rarity.

These ranks should not be interpreted as legal designations.

FEDERAL STATUS

The Division of Natural Heritage uses the standard abbreviations for Federal endangerment developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Endangered Species and Habitat Conservation.

LE - Listed Endangered

LT - Listed Threatened

PE - Proposed Endangered

PT - Proposed Threatened

C - Candidate (formerly C1 - Candidate category 1)

E(S/A) - treat as endangered because of similarity of appearance

T(S/A) - treat as threatened because of similarity of appearance

SOC - Species of Concern species that merit special concern (not a regulatory category)

STATE LEGAL STATUS

The Division of Natural Heritage uses similar abbreviations for State endangerment:

LE - Listed Endangered

PE - Proposed Endangered

SC - Special Concern - animals that merit special concern according to VDGIF (not a regulatory category)

LT - Listed Threatened

PT - Proposed Threatened

C - Candidate

For information on the laws pertaining to threatened or endangered species, please contact:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for all **FEDERALLY** listed species;

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Plant Protection Bureau for **STATE** listed plants and insects

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for all other **STATE** listed animals

CONSERVATION SITES RANKING

Rank is a rating of the significance of the conservation site based on presence and number of natural heritage resources; on a scale of 1-5, 1 being most significant. Sites are also coded to reflect the presence/absence of federally/state listed species:

Conservation Site Ranks

B1 - Outstanding significance

B2 - Very High significance

B3 - High significance

B4 - Moderate significance

B5 - Of general Biodiversity significance

Legal Status of Sites

FL - Federally listed species present

SL - State listed species present

NL - No listed species present

- B. Letters and other comment and support documents
1. Dickenson County Board of Supervisors Resolution of support

Dickenson County Board of Supervisors

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ROGER STANLEY, CHAIRMAN
WILLIS DISTRICT

DELANO SYKES, VICE-CHAIRMAN
SANDLICK DISTRICT

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SHELBIE WILLIS
KENADY DISTRICT

DONNIE W. RIFE
CLINTWOOD DISTRICT



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARK S. VANOVER

P.O. Box 1098
Clintwood, Virginia 24228
Telephone: 276/926-1678
Fax: 276/926-1849
mark.vanover@bos.dcwva.org

RESOLUTION

Reconnaissance Study of the Big Sandy Watershed

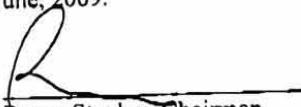
WHEREAS, the Russell Fork and Levisa Rivers are the outlets for several rivers in Buchanan and Dickenson Counties and whereas these rivers have potential to be a major contributor to tourism in these counties; and

WHEREAS, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers stated in a meeting at the Breaks Interstate Park in May 2009 that to maximize the above potential, a study of the Big Sandy Watershed costing \$250,000 would have to be completed; and

WHEREAS, four United States senatorial representatives, two from Virginia, and two congressional representatives, one from Virginia, met in Elkhorn City in April 2006 and verbally agreed to secure funds for this study; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors supports the request for financing in the amount of \$250,000 from the United States Congress and the United States Senate to complete this study.

ADOPTED this 23RD day of June, 2009.


Roger Stanley, Chairman

ATTEST:


Betty Hill, Clerk

2. Breaks Interstate Park Letter of Support

BREAKS INTERSTATE PARK

Post Office Box 100

JUL 13 2009



Breaks, Virginia 24607-0100

Matthew O'Quinn
Superintendent

July 9, 2009

Ms. Lynn Crump
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
203 Governor Street
Richmond, VA 23212

Dear Ms. Crump:

I am writing this letter in support of the Russell Fork River becoming designated as a Scenic River from Splashdam to the Kentucky line. The river is very attractive, with its' huge boulders and rocky cliffs on one side and the railroad on the other. It is also very challenging to the rafters and kayakers that come to "ride the river" when the Flannagan Dam releases water for white water rafting. It is my understanding that Mr. Gene Counts is working on this proposal.

I feel this will be another asset to Dickenson County and can be used as an additional drawing card for tourism.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S. Matthew O'Quinn".

S. Matthew O'Quinn
Superintendent
Breaks Interstate Park

PARK HEADQUARTERS
276-865-4413
FAX: 276-865-4028

RESERVATIONS
1-800-982-5122
Website: www.breakspark.com

BREAKS MOTOR LODGE
RHODODENDRON RESTAURANT
276-865-4414

C. Proposed Legislation

Proposed Legislation for the Scenic River designation of the Russell Fork River in Dickenson County

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY – 2010 SESSION

CHAPTER 4

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 4 of Title 10.1 a section numbered § 10.1-???, relating to Scenic Rivers.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 4 of Title 10.1 a section numbered 10.1-??? as follows:

§ 10.1-???. Russell Fork State Scenic River.

The Russell Fork River in Dickenson County from the Splashdam railroad crossing to the Kentucky line, a distance of approximately 9 miles, is hereby designated a component of the Virginia Scenic Rivers System. Nothing in this section shall preclude the Commonwealth or a local governing body from constructing, reconstructing, or performing necessary maintenance on any road or bridge.