



REGION **13**  
*Southside*



Fall walk | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

### Introduction

The Southside Recreational Planning Region includes Halifax, Mecklenburg and Brunswick counties, and the towns of Alberta, Boydton, Brodnax, Chase City, Clarksville, Clover, Halifax, LaCrosse, Lawrenceville, Scottsburg, South Boston, South Hill and Virgilina. While the region is rural with an agrarian economy, it has begun to experience increased development. There are opportunities to enhance the scenic qualities of the region’s river and scenic road corridors, create greenways, develop parks and protect important natural areas, forests and farmland.

### Regional Focus

**Table 13.1 Most-Needed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

*Southside Recreational Planning Region*

activity	% of households in	
	region	state
Parks	58	49
Natural areas	55	54
Historic areas	46	39
Water access	38	43
Trails	37	43
Scenic drives (driving for pleasure)	29	29
Playing fields, sports and golf facilities	26	22

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey



**Table 13.2 Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities By Participation**

Southside Recreational Planning Region

activity	% household
Driving for pleasure	61
Freshwater fishing	58
Visiting natural areas	56
Walking for pleasure	54
Visiting parks (local, state & national)	43
Sunbathing/relaxing on a beach	32
Swimming/outdoor pool	32
Hunting	31
Gardening	31
Music festivals	28

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey. Visit [www.dcr.virginia.gov/vop](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/vop) to view regional participation rates for more than 100 activities.



The water | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

### Regional Featured Projects

To be considered a regional featured project, a project must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Has statewide or regional significance.
- Addresses top statewide or regional needs identified by the Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey.
- Has involvement and support from multiple jurisdictions in the region.
- Able to be initiated within the next five years.

Featured projects for the Southside region:

- Develop the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail plan.
- Complete the Tobacco Heritage Trail, including local projects.
- Develop the East Coast Greenway.
- Develop a state park in Brunswick County.
- Develop the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway – this includes the Bannister, Hyco, Dan, and Staunton Rivers, Kerr Lake and Lake Gaston
- Develop the Nottoway Blueway.
- Develop the Meherrin River Blueway.
- Designate the following routes as Virginia Byways: Routes 57, 40 and 360 in Halifax, Pittsylvania and Henry Counties.

### Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact

**Table 13.3 Per-Capita Spending on Parks and Recreation**

Southside Recreational Planning Region

locality	dollars
Brunswick County	0.94
Halifax County	7.15
Mecklenburg County	0.35
Town of South Boston	33.34
Town of South Hill	85.10
Statewide	71.09

Source: Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, "Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures," 2016.

**Table 13.4 Virginia State Parks 2017 Attendance and Economic Impact***Southside Recreational Planning Region*

state park	location	overnight visitors	day-use visitors	total visitors	economic impact
Occoneechee	Mecklenburg County	32,689	174,036	206,725	\$4.9M
Staunton River	Halifax County	27,640	113,587	141,227	\$3.5M
Staunton River Battlefield	Halifax, Charlotte counties	0	35,722	35,722	

*Source: Virginia State Parks*

## Regional Health

**Table 13.5 Health Trends***Southside Recreational Planning Region*

locality	adult smoking (% of adults)	adult obesity (% of adults with BMI over 30)	physical inactivity (% of adults age 20 or over reporting no leisure time/physical activity)	access to exercise opportunities (% population with adequate access to locations for physical activity)	air pollution – particulate matter (micrograms per cubic meter)
Brunswick County	20	36	26	23	8.6
Halifax County	19	32	28	40	9
Mecklenburg County	18	31	28	48	8.9
Statewide	17	27	21	81	8.7

*Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

## Outdoor Recreation Interface with Virginia Tourism

The Virginia State Tourism Plan was completed by Virginia Tourism Corp. in March 2013. In 2017, Virginia Tourism compiled “Nature & Outdoors” recommendations in Appendix 13 for each recreation planning region.

### Regional Historic Resources

The Southside region owes its early historic development to the popularity of tobacco. Much of the region’s arable lands were utilized for tobacco production throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Towns such as South Boston, South Hill, Lawrenceville and Chase City were all focal points of tobacco processing and distribution. Today, the Tobacco Heritage Trail (currently under construction), with segments in each of the four counties that comprise this region, offers visitors a tangible reminder of the history of this area. Many historic farmsteads and communities include both manor houses and the homes of enslaved persons and tenants, and extensive evidence for indigenous occupation prior to European settlement can be found.

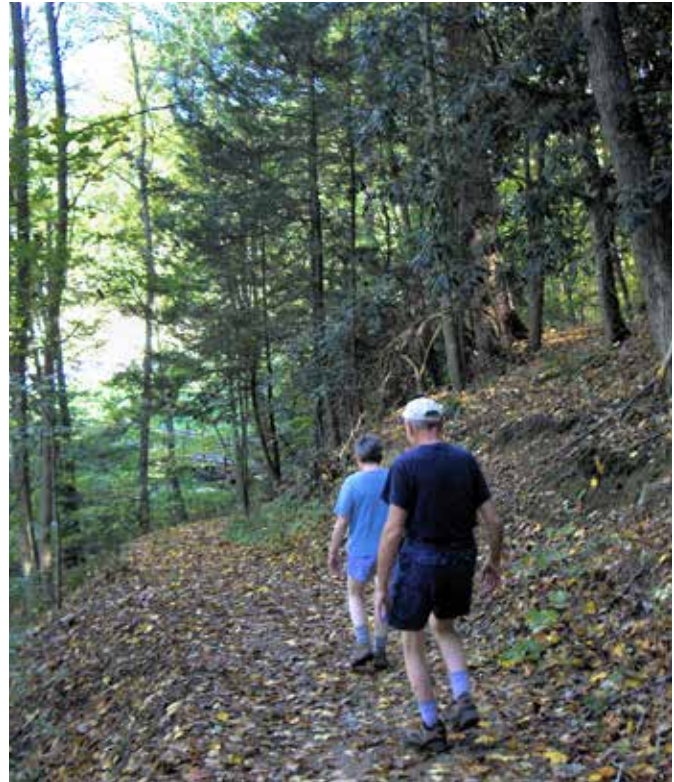
Appropriate conservation activities may include installation of highway markers to commemorate historic locations and events, placement of historic properties on the Virginia Landmarks Register or National Register of Historic Places and placement of historic preservation and open space easements. Conservation targets include: 19th century farmsteads, 19th and early 20th century dwellings and commercial buildings/districts; historic schools and churches; historic transportation routes and crossroads, sites and properties associated with enslaved persons/communities; and significant prehistoric habitation sites. Information about historic buildings, structures and archaeological sites is maintained in the permanent files of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and is available to local planners.

**Table 13.6 Regional Historic Resources**

*Southside Recreational Planning Region*

resource	location
Berry Hill	Halifax County
South Boston Historic District	Halifax County
Fort Christanna	Brunswick County
Clarksville Historic District	Mecklenburg County
Prestwould	Mecklenburg County

Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources



Trail time | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

### Land Conservation

**Table 13.7 Conserved Lands**

*Southside Recreational Planning Region*

locality	easement acres	ownership acres
Brunswick County	3,619.82	6,389.14
Halifax County	24,635.75	7,713.70
Mecklenburg County	6,438.59	4,852.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,649.00</b>	

Source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Protected Lands Inventory

### Natural Area Preserves and Natural Heritage Resources

Southside lies squarely in Virginia’s southern Piedmont, an area with a long history of agriculture and timber production, activities not always conducive to sustaining the best examples of native biological diversity. However, the district supports some of the rarest species and natural communities in the world. Biological highlights of the district are a population of oak barrens Barbara’s buttons, plant communities associated with greenstone-influenced hardpan soils, one of the world’s largest populations of the federally endangered Michaux’s sumac and granite flatrock communities.

DCR recommends that conservation activities and land protection efforts in the region focus on unprotected Essential Conservation Sites and all unprotected portions of Natural Area Preserve resiliency areas. Secondly, strategic land conservation should expand upon existing managed areas and seek connectivity via protecting and/or managing intact ecological cores and natural vegetation cover between currently protected lands. Finally, attention on remaining unprotected natural heritage resources within the region should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The appropriate conservation activities and methods of protection will vary with each site but may include placing the site on Virginia’s Registry of Natural Areas; developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner; securing a conservation easement through a local land trust; acquiring the site through a locality or local land trust; dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner; or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Conservation targets of special significance in the region include:

- Piedmont hardpan forests
- Piedmont savannahs
- Granite flatrock communities

Information about the location of conservation sites and the natural heritage resources they contain, as well as management assistance, is available to local planners from DCR’s Natural Heritage Program. For more on the Natural Heritage Program, see Chapter 11 and Appendix 11.

**Table 13.8 Natural Area Preserves**

*Southside Recreational Planning Region*

preserve name	owner	locality
Difficult Creek	DCR	Halifax County
Dundas Granite Flatrock	Private	Brunswick County

**Table 13.9 Natural Heritage Resources**

*Southside Recreational Planning Region*

Number of occurrences of rare species and significant natural communities	198
Number of different rare species and significant community types (natural heritage elements)	93
Number of globally rare natural heritage elements	20
Number of species listed as federally endangered or threatened	4
Number of species listed as state endangered or threatened	9
Number of terrestrial conservation sites identified by DCR	38
Number of conservation sites with little or no protection	33
Number of partially protected conservation sites	5
Number of well protected conservation sites	0

*Information as of Feb. 28, 2018. Source: Virginia Natural Heritage Program*