



REGION **4**  
*New River Valley*

### Introduction

The New River Valley Recreational Planning Region includes Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski counties, the city of Radford and the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg. The region lies between West Virginia on the west and the Blue Ridge Parkway on the east. National forest lands blanket the ridges while picturesque farms and towns dot the New River Valley. The character of the region is influenced by the New River, an American Heritage River, providing high-quality fishing and swimming opportunities. Claytor Lake, a hydroelectric power impoundment on the New River, provides opportunities for power boating, sailing, water skiing, fishing and other water sports.

### Regional Focus

**Table 4.1 Most-Needed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

*New River Valley Recreational Planning Region*

activity	% of households in	
	region	state
Natural areas	62	54
Water access	53	43
Parks	51	49
Trails	46	43
Historic areas	43	39
Scenic drives (driving for pleasure)	25	29
Playing fields, sports and golf facilities	22	22

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey.

**Table 4.2 Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities By Participation**

*New River Valley Recreational Planning Region*

activity	% household
Visiting natural areas	76
Walking for pleasure	76
Driving for pleasure	74
Visiting parks (local, state & national)	61
Sunbathing/relaxing on a beach	54
Freshwater fishing	51
Swimming/beach/lake river (open water)	47
Swimming/outdoor pool	46
Outdoor festivals (music festivals, outdoor-themed festivals, extreme sports festivals, etc.)	43
Viewing the water	37

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.

### 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 New River Valley region:

- Connect the Huckleberry Trail to other regional and local trails.
- Connect the New River Trail eastward to Pulaski.
- Extend Floyd County trails from the town of Floyd into the county.

- Expand the Giles County section of the Mary Draper Ingles Trail into West Virginia.
- Connect the Draper Mountain hiking and mountain bike trails to the New River Trail State Park.

### Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact

**Table 4.3 Per-Capita Spending on Parks and Recreation**

*New River Valley Recreational Planning Region*

locality	dollars
Floyd County	3.56
Giles County	38.68
Montgomery County	9.92
Pulaski County	22.78
Town of Blacksburg	67.73
Town of Christiansburg	232.91
Town of Pulaski	73.51
City of Radford	82.66
Statewide	71.09
City of Bristol	135.22
City of Galax	206.53
Statewide	71.09

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



The tunnel on the New River trail | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

**Table 4.4 Virginia State Parks 2017 Attendance and Economic Impact**

*New River Valley Recreational Planning Region*

state park	location	overnight visitors	day-use visitors	total visitors	economic impact
Claytor Lake	Pulaski County	72,062	198,654	270,716	\$8.1M
New River Trail	Carroll, Grayson, Pulaski, Wythe counties; town of Galax	8,100	1,189,127	1,197,227	\$29.2M

Source: Virginia State Parks

## Regional Health

**Table 4.5 Health Trends**

*New River Valley 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)
Floyd County	15	27	25	43	8.5
Giles County	15	30	32	66	8.6
Montgomery County	18	24	20	76	8.9
Pulaski County	16	33	27	67	8.8
City of Radford	23	30	20	100	8.7
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 New River Valley region is named for the New River, a designated American Heritage River that flows northwest through Virginia. The New River served as a transportation route for indigenous people as well as later settlers, and today attracts visitors interested in its natural and recreational qualities. The region includes Blacksburg, home to Virginia Tech. This area is also at the southern edge of the “hot springs” region and contains late 19th century hotels and resorts constructed to take advantage of these natural thermal baths. Rural historic districts allow visitors access to scenic drives through areas that remain largely agricultural.

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; thermal springs resorts and hotels; 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 4.6 Regional Historic Resources**

*New River Valley Recreational Planning Region*

resource	location
Currie House	Town of Blacksburg
Greater Newport Rural Historic District	Giles and Montgomery Counties
Yellow Sulphur Springs	Montgomery County
Kentland Farm Archaeological and Historic District	Pulaski County
Glencoe	City of Radford

Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources



Claytor Lake State Park, Pulaski County | Sam Dean/Virginia Tourism Corp.

### Land Conservation

**Table 4.7 Conserved Lands**

*New River Valley Recreational Planning Region*

locality	easement acres	ownership acres
City of Radford	149.00	84.67
Floyd County	8,355.91	6,552.41
Giles County	5,505.82	65,473.28
Montgomery County	15,582.30	23,197.72
Pulaski County	4,371.11	20,278.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>149,550.22</b>	

Source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Protected Lands Inventory

### Natural Area Preserves and Natural Heritage Resources

The New River Valley spans an ecologically diverse area. The northern half of the region is underlain by limestone and other calcium-rich geology, which supports karst topography, characterized by caves, sinkholes and sinking streams. Below ground, these areas harbor many rare cave-dwelling species and above ground many rare plants and unusual plant communities. One of the world’s rarest plants, Peters Mountain Mallow, is confined to a single mountain within this region. The southern half of the district features seepage wetlands that are home to the globally rare bog turtle, as well as Buffalo Mountain, which features a variety of rare plant 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 include:

- Significant caves and karst areas.
- Improving water quality for globally rare aquatic communities.
- Terrestrial limestone communities.
- Significant wetlands in Floyd County.
- Establish a public access point and hiking trails at Pedlar Hills Glades Natural Area Preserve.
- Establishment of segments of the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail on public lands with significant karst areas.

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 4.8 Natural Area Preserves**

*New River Valley Recreational Planning Region*

preserve name	owner	locality
Buffalo Mountain	DCR	Floyd County
Camp Branch Wetlands	Private	Floyd County
Chestnut Creek Wetland	DCR	Floyd County
Chestnut Ridge	Private	Giles County
Clover Hollow	DCR	Giles County
Mill Creek Springs	The Nature Conservancy	Montgomery County
Pedlar Hills Glades	DCR and private	Montgomery County
Sweet Springs	Private	Montgomery County

**Table 4.9 Natural Heritage Resources**

*New River Valley Recreational Planning Region*

Number of occurrences of rare species and significant natural communities	637
Number of different rare species and significant community types (natural heritage elements)	257
Number of globally rare natural heritage elements	67
Number of species listed as federally endangered or threatened	12
Number of species listed as state endangered or threatened	25
Number of terrestrial conservation sites identified by DCR	97
Number of conservation sites with little or no protection	53
Number of partially protected conservation sites	34
Number of well protected conservation sites	10

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



*The New River in Giles County | Jeff Greenough*