



REGION

19

Crater

Having a blast at Pocahontas State Park's Aquatic Center | Bill Crabtree, Jr./Va. Tourism Corp.

Introduction

The Crater Recreational Planning Region includes Charles City, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Sussex and Surry; the cities of Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell and Petersburg; and the towns of Claremont, Dendron, Jarratt, McKenney, Stony Creek, Surry, Wakefield and Waverly. The army post of Fort Lee has witnessed a massive population increase and averages 34,000 troops daily. In response to intense development pressures, due to the proximity to the Richmond region, more landholders are looking to protect agricultural and rural landscapes. The preservation of remaining open space in urban areas, and the effective management and protection of undeveloped land, will help prevent suburban sprawl.

Regional Focus

Table 19.1 Most-Needed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Crater Recreational Planning Region

activity	% of households in	
	region	state
Water access	46	43
Parks	45	49
Historic areas	43	39
Natural areas	40	54
Playing fields, sports and golf facilities	31	22
Trails	30	43
Scenic drives (driving for pleasure)	27	29

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey.

Table 19.2 Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities By Participation

Crater Recreational Planning Region

activity	% household
Driving for pleasure	60
Visiting natural areas	60
Walking for pleasure	57
Freshwater fishing	46
Visiting parks (local, state & national)	41
Swimming/outdoor pool	39
Sunbathing/relaxing on a beach	35
Visiting historic areas	30
Viewing the water	28
Gardening	28

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



Bring the kids for a day in the park | 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 Crater region:

- Develop the Appomattox River Trail based on the master plan.
- Implement the Lower Appomattox River Blueway master plan.
- Develop the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.
- Develop the East Coast Greenway.
- Renovate Ferndale Park.
- Renovate Lee Park in Petersburg.
- Develop Appomattox River Regional Park in Prince George.
- Enhance Surry County regional parks with water access and expanded recreational opportunities.
- Develop Sussex County Regional Park.
- Acquire and develop Slagle’s Lake in the town of Emporia and Greenville County.

- Expand conservation and improve woodland and water-oriented recreational access in Sussex County in the vicinity of the Airfield 4-H Educational Center and Big Woods State Forest and Wildlife Management Area.
- Implement Greenville County’s Spanglers Lake Recreation Park Plan.

Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact

Table 19.3 Per-Capita Spending on Parks and Recreation

Crater Recreational Planning Region

locality	dollars
Charles City County	56.16
Chesterfield County	26.44
Dinwiddie County	43.05
Greenville County	19.42
Prince George County	24.10
Surry County	84.62
Sussex County	1.35
City of Colonial Heights	88.41
City of Emporia	31.94
City of Hopewell	0
City of Petersburg	64.41
Statewide	71.09

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



Hopewell City Park | Danette Poole/Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Table 19.4 Virginia State Parks 2017 Attendance and Economic Impact*Crater Recreational Planning Region*

state park	location	overnight visitors	day-use visitors	total visitors	economic impact
Chippokes Plantation	Surry County*	33,081	71,028	104,109	\$4.0M
Pocahontas	Chesterfield County**	128,028	1,051,330	1,179,358	\$20.8M

* *Crater and Hampton Roads regions share Surry County.*** *Crater and Richmond Regional regions share Chesterfield County.**Source: Virginia State Parks*

Regional Health

Table 19.5 Health Trends*Crater 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)
Charles City County	18	35	28	9	8.6
Dinwiddie County	17	33	27	44	8.9
Greensville County	22	33	27	27	8.6
Prince George County	17	33	24	73	9
Surry County	18	35	26	9	8.2
Sussex County	21	36	26	3	8.6
City of Colonial Heights	15	27	26	99	9
City of Emporia	24	30	28	97	8.5
City of Hopewell	19	32	26	94	9
City of Petersburg	22	41	26	93	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

Despite increasing development pressure in this area, the Crater region retains a great deal of historic integrity in the form of numerous historic districts, individually listed properties on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as several Civil War battlefields. The Petersburg battlefield receives the highest amount of visitation due to the large amount of land that remains preserved and high degree of preservation of numerous siege-related fortifications, breastworks and other military defense features. There are numerous driving, biking and walking trails in the area to provide visitors with a better understanding of the history and development of the region. The trail system is highlighted by the Virginia Capital bike path that extends through the Charles City County portion of the region.

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: 17th, 18th, 19th and early 20th century dwellings and commercial buildings/districts; historic schools and churches; Civil War-related resources and battlefields; historic transportation routes and crossroads; 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.



Bacon's Castle, Surry County | Bill Crabtree Jr./Virginia Tourism Corp.

Table 19.6 Regional Historic Resources

Crater Recreational Planning Region

resource	location
Petersburg, Peebles Farm, The Breakthrough, White Oak Road, Hatcher's Run, and Ream's Station Battlefields	Region-wide
Centre Hill	City of Petersburg
Battersea	City of Petersburg
Chippokes Plantation Historic District	Surry County
Old Dinwiddie County Courthouse	Dinwiddie County
King and Queen Courthouse Tavern	King and Queen County

Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Land Conservation

Table 19.7 Conserved Lands

Crater Recreational Planning Region

locality	easement acres	ownership acres
City of Colonial Heights	0.64	0.00
City of Emporia	0.00	0.00
City of Hopewell	23.30	23.19
City of Petersburg	97.50	1,413.29
Dinwiddie County	5,477.09	15,779.69
Greensville County	2,596.92	428.00
Prince George County	6,162.91	7,770.41
Surry County	3,938.60	6,288.19
Sussex County	4,931.09	11,629.99
Total		66,560.81

Source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Protected Lands Inventory

Natural Area Preserves and Natural Heritage Resources

The Crater Planning region is the most biologically diverse of the regions along the fall line. On the border with North Carolina, many species reach their northern limit here including the oak toad, sandhills lily and red-cockaded woodpecker. Western areas of the district include habitat for the federally endangered Michaux’s sumac and eastern areas include expansive bottomland forests and remnants of fire-maintained woodland communities. Several species of rare fishes, mussels and salamanders occur in the region’s rivers.

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:

- Expand protection and ecological management of forestland around Piney Grove Preserve
- Forestland along the Blackwater, Meherrin and Nottoway rivers
- Pine flatwoods and coastal plain depression pond communities in Prince George and Sussex counties
- Restore native longleaf pine communities on sandhills and other habitats
- Buffer lands around Fort Pickett.

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 19.8 Natural Area Preserves

Crater Recreational Planning Region

preserve name	owner	locality
Cherry Orchard Bog	DCR and Stafford County	Sussex, Prince George counties
Chub Sandhill	DCR	Sussex County
Dendron Swamp	DCR	Sussex County

Table 19.9 Natural Heritage Resources

Crater Recreational Planning Region

Number of occurrences of rare species and significant natural communities	591
Number of different rare species and significant community types (natural heritage elements)	213
Number of globally rare natural heritage elements	46
Number of species listed as federally endangered or threatened	9
Number of species listed as state endangered or threatened	20
Number of terrestrial conservation sites identified by DCR	98
Number of conservation sites with little or no protection	90
Number of partially protected conservation sites	8
Number of well protected conservation sites	0

Information as of Feb. 219, 20119. Source: Virginia Natural Heritage Program