

State Trails Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 14, 2024
1:30PM to 3:00PM (virtual)



Housekeeping

- There will be a comment period at the end of the meeting
- Until then, please keep microphone muted
- During comments time please “Raise your hand” to be recognized or put your question in the chat box



Welcome



Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Report from VDOT Trails Office
- III. Member Reports
 - ❖ NVRC Wayfinding and Amenities
 - ❖ Virginia Creeper Trail Update
- IV. Vote on SOP – online poll
- V. 2024 STAC report
- VI. Spring Meeting Planning





Virginia Department of Transportation

STATE TRAILS OFFICE UPDATES



State Trails Advisory Committee
Thursday, November 14, 2024

Agenda

- Office Updates
- Resource Hub
- Trail Design Guide
- Statewide Trails Plan Phase 1 & 2

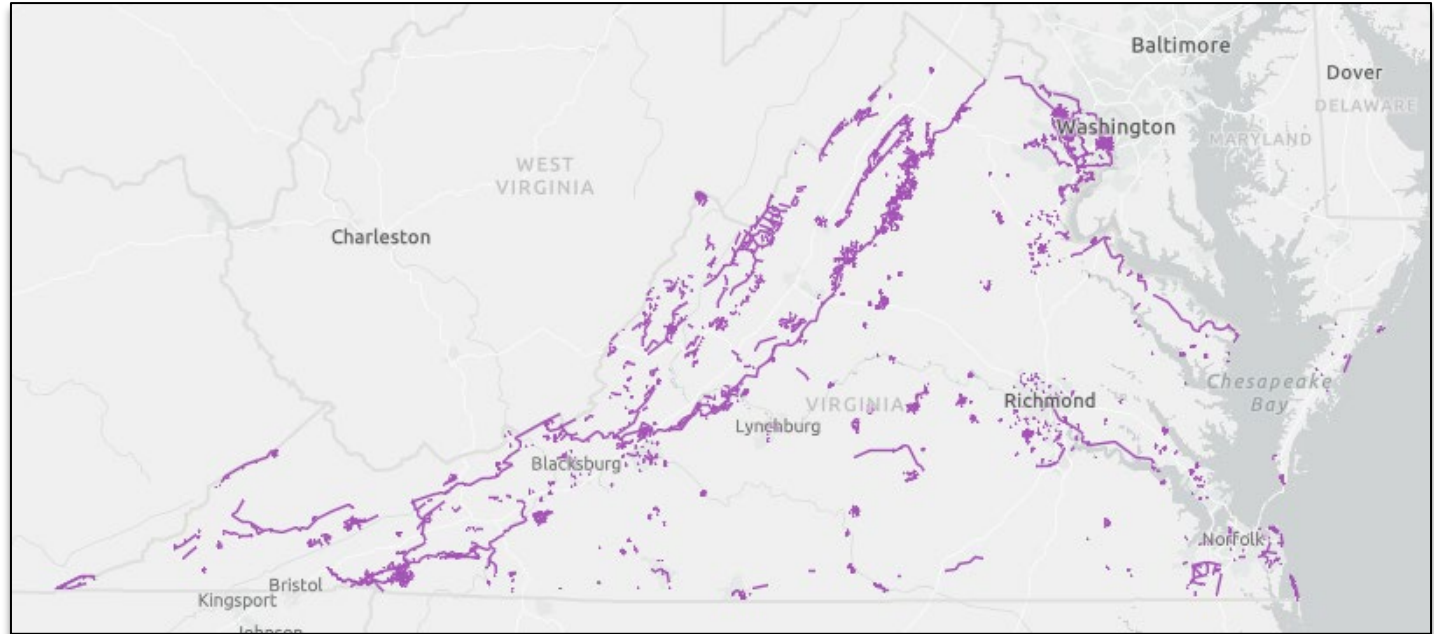


*The Virginia Creeper Trail,
Southwest Virginia*

Resource Hub

- Collect Trail Data
 - Shared-use paths
 - Rail-to-trail/rail-with-trail
 - Single track
 - State park trails
 - Publicly and privately owned- publicly accessible trails

- Survey123 – Data Collection
- Three methods for sending data
 - Send Shapefile
 - Submit Excel Using Data Template
 - Manual Data Entry



Trails Data Inventory

Trail Design and Cost Guidelines

- Brochure
- Draft Outline:
 - Trail Users Overview
 - Typical Trail Corridors
 - Trail Typologies
 - Trail Design Guidance
 - Trail Branding
- Decision matrix for trail development based on context, design, and federal/state funding eligibility criteria
- Overview of additional considerations
 - Cost, resiliency, maintenance needs, and accessibility
- Expected Early Fall 2025



Statewide Multi-use Trails Plan Phase I Status

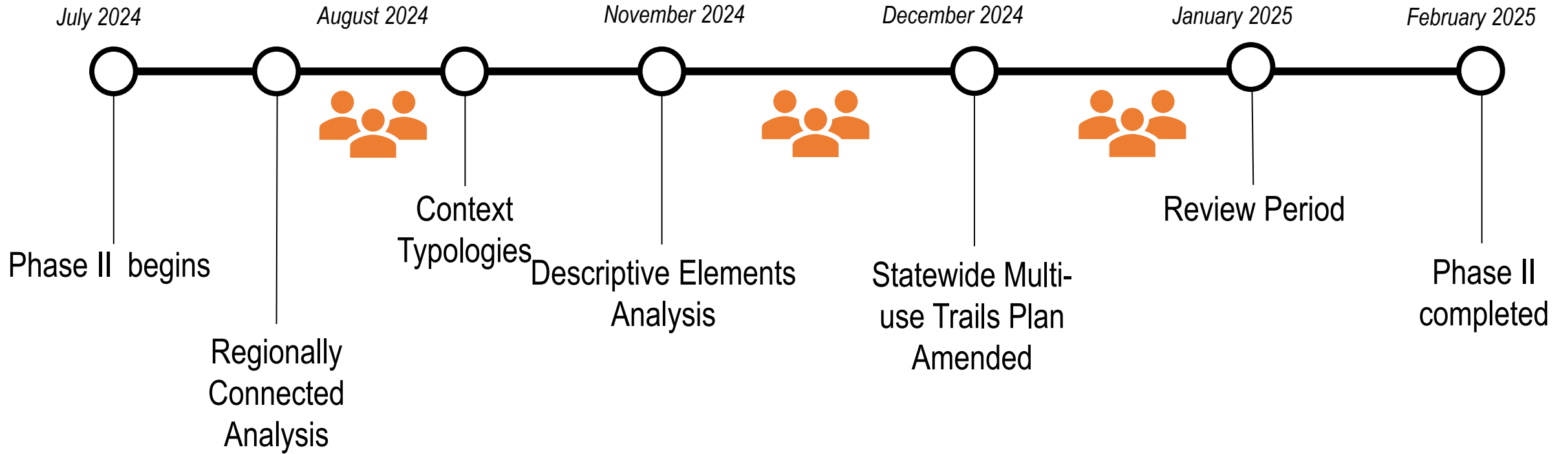
- **Analyses Completed**
 - Population
 - Employment
 - Underserved communities
 - Safety priority corridors
- **Phase I Review**
 - State Trails Office
 - VDOT Chief of Policy
 - Secretary of Transportation
 - Governor's Office



Phase II Scope

- State Trails Office Advisory Committee Meetings
 - No public engagement
- Spatial Analysis
 - Regionally connected
 - Urban, suburban, rural typologies
 - Descriptive elements
 - Tiering of network
- Aggregated funding opportunities
- ArcGIS Online StoryMap
- Updated Statewide Multi-use Trails Plan

Phase II Schedule - Updated

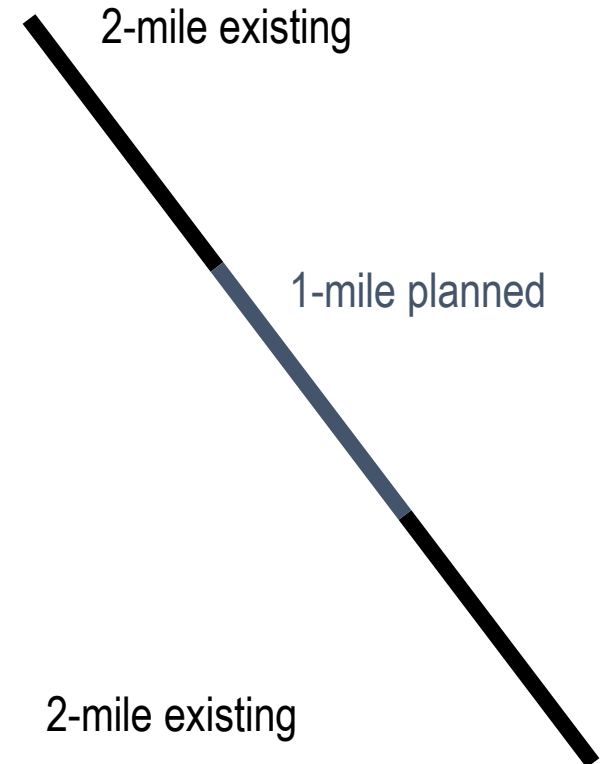


Spatial Analysis - Regionally Connected Definition

- From Phase I: “Regionally Connected: Strive for regional connectivity by linking people to places and other trail facilities.”
- What makes a trail regionally connected?
 - Trail surface (prerequisite for regional connectivity)
 - Trail length – including effective length if linking with existing trails
 - Localities and destinations served

Regionally Connected - Join by Distance

- Spatial analysis was conducted to identify planned trails that extend or fill the gaps in the existing trail network (0.1 miles distance)
- Length of these combined segments were calculated
- 5-mile threshold applied for trail segment to be regionally connected
- Example: A 1-mile trail that bridges a gap between two 2-mile trails could be considered 5 miles in total length.



Urban and Rural Typologies

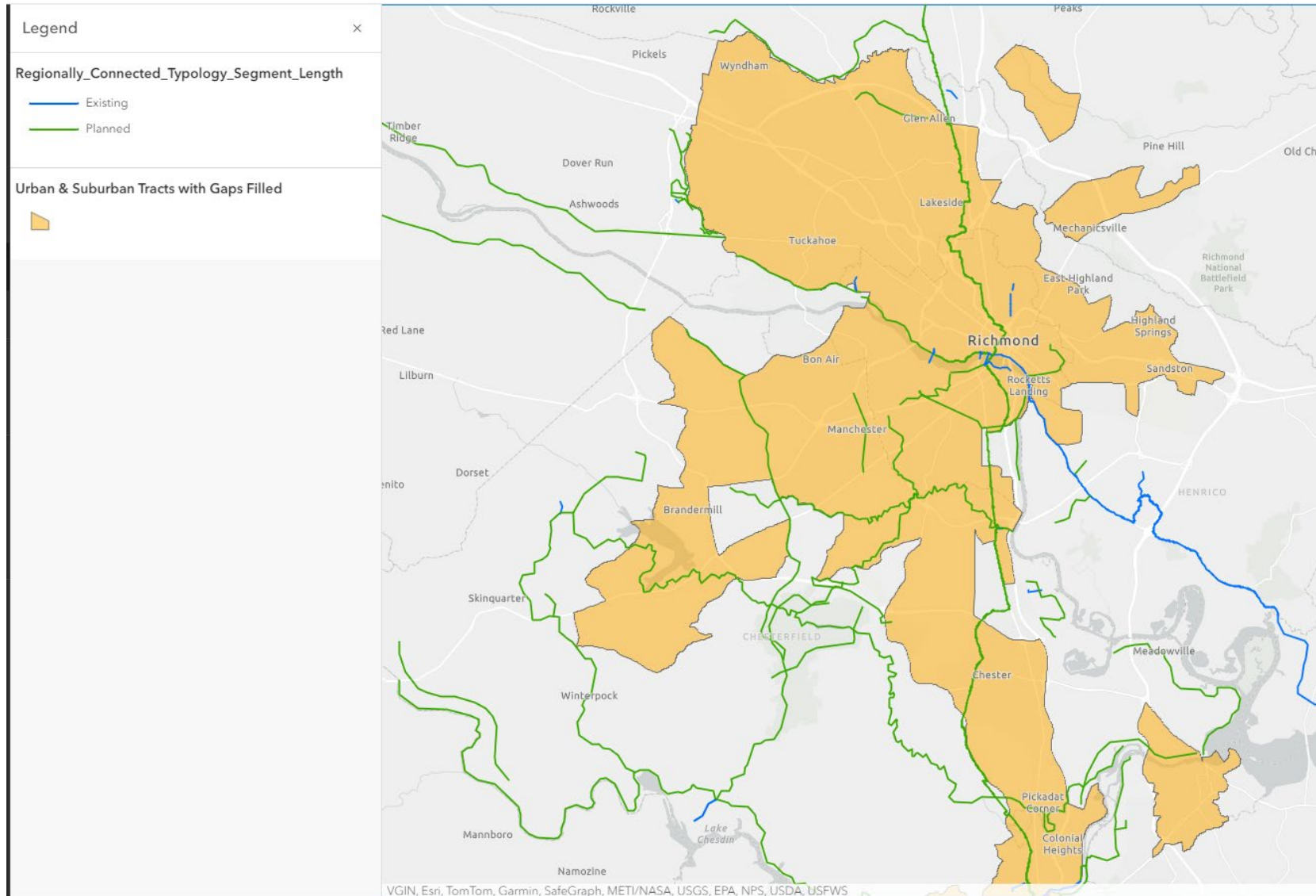
- Trails for each typology will be tiered to understand how they are providing access.
 - Urban trails that provide connections across a locality or between multiple neighboring localities, and that provide alternatives for commuters and/or access to regional destinations – e.g. jobs, housing, parks , etc.
 - Rural trails that connect to towns/population centers, jobs, services, etc.
- Each typology provides merit and trails within each will be assessed accordingly

Descriptive Elements Analysis

- Phase II descriptive elements:

Element	Data Source	Question Being Answered
Key destinations	Virginia Landmarks Dataset (VGIN)	How can these facilities provide access to key destinations (schools, libraries, emergency services, hospitals, Commonwealth facilities) ?
Transit stops	Open-source transit data (GTFS)	
Dedicated bicycle facilities	VDOT Bicycle Facilities Inventory	How can these facilities connect to other travel modes and facilities for non-motorized users?
Pedestrian facilities	Open-source data	
State and local parks	ESRI, DCR, ParkScore	How does this network provide access to recreation facilities?
Safety and Health Opportunity Index	PBSAP 4.0 and HOI	How can these facilities help improve safety and health initiatives?

Descriptive Elements Analysis



Contact Us:

- Website: vdot.virginia.gov/trails
-
- Contact the State Trails Office: statetrailsoffice@vdot.virginia.gov



Reports from Members

- Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- Virginia Creeper Trail Update





2024 Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Project Updates

November 14, 2024

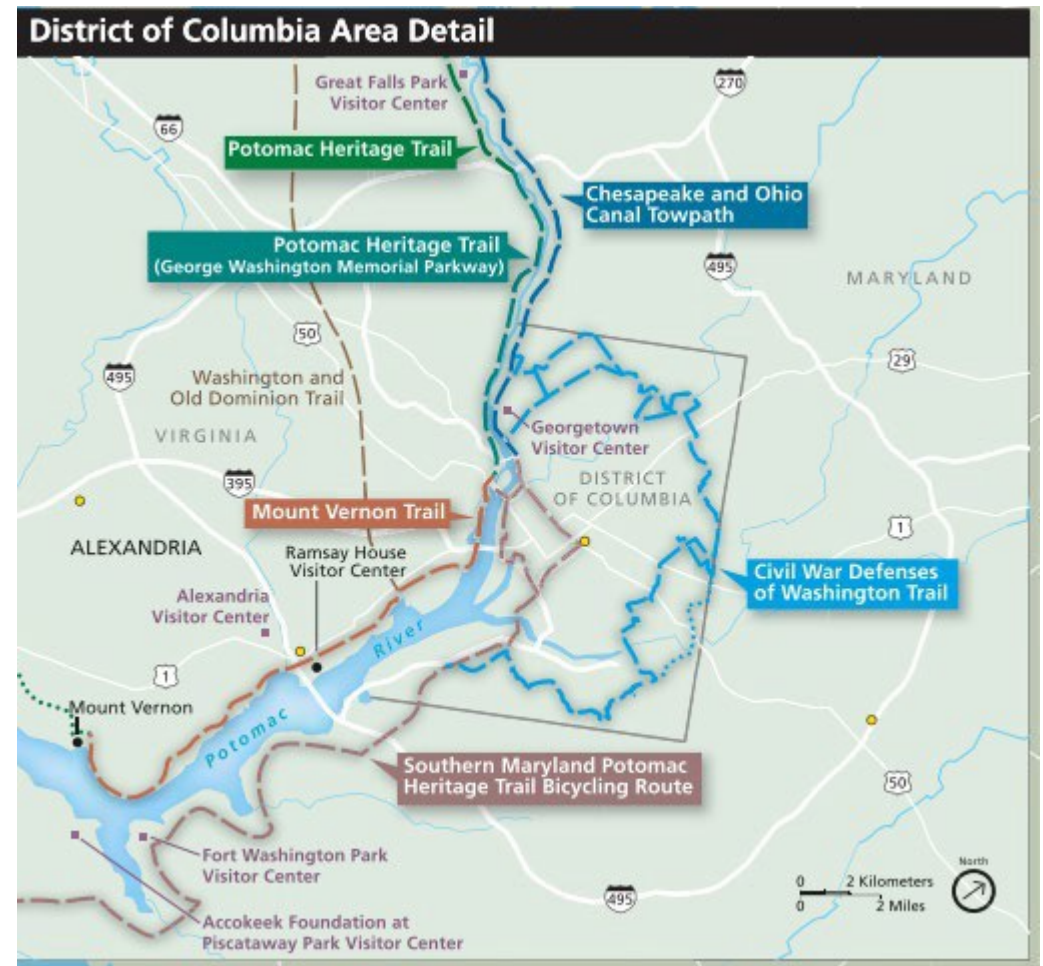


novaregion.org / [@novaregion](https://www.instagram.com/novaregion)



NVRC and The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

- A 1983 amendment to the National Trail System Act of 1968 designated the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail ("the Trail" or PHNST) as a component of the National Trails System
- The PHNST currently spans over 900 miles and is a braided trail network from the Laurel Hills Highlands Trail in western Pennsylvania to the mouth of the Potomac River.
- Partnerships are at the heart of the Trail concept, creating a locally-managed, non-motorized trail network for outdoor recreation, education, transportation, health and heritage tourism.
- NVRC has been designated by NPS through cooperative agreements to coordinate the Northern Virginia section of the PHNST since the 1980's.



Wayfinding and Amenities Data Collection



SURVEY123 FIELD APP



20+ VOLUNTEERS



DIVIDED TRAIL INTO
SECTIONS FOR TASK
ASSIGNMENT

Results at a Glance





Sharing of Study Results: Interactive Maps & Report

The study report and interactive maps are posted on the PHNST Dashboard [2024 Wayfinding and Amenities Study Page](#)

Report provides:

- Study background
- Overview of survey data (e.g., total numbers, condition information)
- Links to online maps and resources
- Takeaways and preliminary findings
- Feedback from volunteers

nvrc  

Collection

Wayfinding, Amenities, and Information Panels Assessment

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
Northern Virginia

Northern Virginia Regional Commission in Partnership with the U.S. National Park Service

[Get started](#)

1 Amenities

2 Information Panels

3 Wayfinding - Condition

4 Wayfinding - Type



Interpretation Enhancement Study

- Groups interviewed:**



1. Occoquan Historical Society
2. Fairfax County Master Naturalists
3. Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area
4. Leesylvania State Park staff
5. Riverbend Park staff



[Interpretive Enhancement Study / PHNST Dashboard \(potomacheritagenoa.com\)](https://potomacheritagenoa.com)

- Topics for new signage:**

1. Two signs at Occoquan, one focusing on the region's natural history and the other highlighting the historic industrial development in Occoquan (e.g., grist milling and iron forging) and its reliance on skilled labor of enslaved peoples
2. Water Resources of the Potomac, at Leesylvania State Park
3. Improved signage at Basil Newman and Bles Park, in partnership with Loudoun County and NPS






Basil Newman Riverfront Park

Basil Newman was a free Black man who was born in Loudoun County, Virginia, in November 1779. He became a boatman, or ferry man, at Edwards Ferry in the first half of the nineteenth century. Newman owned land, a warehouse, and a gristmill, as well as his ferry boat. He operated the ferry from the mouth of Goose Creek in Loudoun County, conveying goods as well as people across the Potomac to the community of Edwards Ferry on the C&O Canal in Montgomery County, Maryland. Although there was an ample population of antislavery Quakers in Loudoun County in the mid-1800s, many slaveholders also resided here. Black boatmen like Newman faced suspicion and mistrust from slaveholders because their work presented an opportunity to help enslaved people escape from Virginia to the C&O Canal, which could be traveled through Maryland toward freedom in Pennsylvania.


Experience Your Park

This riverfront park is part of a linear park system in Loudoun County, Virginia, that follows the path of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Follow the signs that lead through the golf course to the trail and its edge. Basil Newman Park consists of over 100 acres of parkland along the Potomac River and Goose Creek. The Riverfront Drive Trailhead canoe and kayak launch off Riverfront Drive offers river access via the creek.





Head west along the river and south along Goose Creek to Riverpoint Drive Trailhead. There you'll find the Elizabeth Mills ruins, where the historic Carolina Road bridged the creek, and remains of the Goose Creek Canal. Along the way you'll discover a double canal lock (above), built of Seneca sandstone in the 1840s and still in use only once. The round-top lock takes about two hours at an easy pace.




NEW WARE-HOUSE.
 THE PUBLIC is hereby notified that the property of the late WARE-HOUSE, on the Potomac, about 3 miles from Leesylvania, Virginia, is now for sale. The premises consist of a large building, a grist mill, and a saw mill, and the same would be sold for cash or on credit. The terms of sale will be given to all interested parties by the undersigned at the public sale. BAZIL NEWMAN, N. B. On hand and for sale at all times a full supply of Potomac and Hill and other article made by Edmund March 1848

Left: Basil Newman placed numerous ads in Leesylvania's weekly *Centinel of Liberty* informing the public about his wares, as well as his boat and ability to move merchandise, like flour or grain. It was rare for free Black men to advertise in the *Centinel of Liberty* during the 1830s and 40s when Newman was posting his notices.


Middle: A canal boat on the C&O Canal, similar in look to those that would have been used on the Goose Creek Canal.

The effort to make Goose Creek and Little River navigable by locks and dams may now be admitted to have been a failure . . .



—E.E. Powell, president Goose Creek and Little River Navigation Company, 1857



Scan the QR code above for additional information about the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST).



Look out for PHNST trail signs and blue signs as you explore the park!

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission Seeks Feedback on the Loudoun County Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) Feasibility Study

NVRC, in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) and Loudoun County, is seeking public feedback on the initial results from a feasibility study. An analysis has been conducted to investigate the most feasible route options for completing the network gap in the PHNST in the county. The project intends identify, assess, and present the feasibility of potential routes in the PHNST corridor westward from the Town of Leesburg.


Feedback during this public meeting will help the consulting firm and project managers finalize results from the study.

Meeting Details

When?
Tuesday, October 29th from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM.

Who is Invited to Attend?
The general public, including community members, businesses, and other interested parties.

Where?
The Social Hall in the Ida Lee Community Center in Leesburg, Virginia. A virtual option is also available through Zoom registration (scan the QR code below).



Learn more at <https://www.potomacheritagenovacom/loudoun-feasibility-study>

Contact Linnea Sherman, NVRC's Regional Trails Coordinator, at lsherman@novaregion.org with any questions.

Loudoun County Feasibility Study

Partnership with the National Park Service and Loudoun County to identify the most feasible route options for completing the PHNST network gap in Loudoun County with considerations for trail construction, maintenance, land ownership, accessibility, park connections, and scenic views.

Recent Updates:

- 10.29 Public Meeting: As the project consultant, Lardner Klein, is finalizing the study analysis, the public meeting offered the opportunity for community members to learn about and provide feedback on the initial results of the feasibility study.
- The study is expected to be finalized in December 2024.

Thank You!

- NVRC Points of Contact:
 - Rebecca Murphy: General Programming (rmurphy@novaregion.org)
 - Debbie Spiliotopoulos: General Programming (dspilio@novaregion.org)
- Jill Kaneff: GIS, Mapping, Data, Research and Analysis (jkaneff@novaregion.org)
- Linnea Sherman: Regional Trails Coordinator (lsherman@novaregion.org)

Virginia Creeper Trail

Status Update

September 27, 2024 to Current



Trestle 18



Trestle 19



Trestle 23



Trestle 29



Trestle 34



Trestle 35



Route 58



Contact info:

Virginia Creeper Trail
Conservancy

P.O. Box 55

Damascus, VA 24236

Lisa Quigley, Exec Director

804-334-5853



SOP Revisions Summary

Committee Composition:

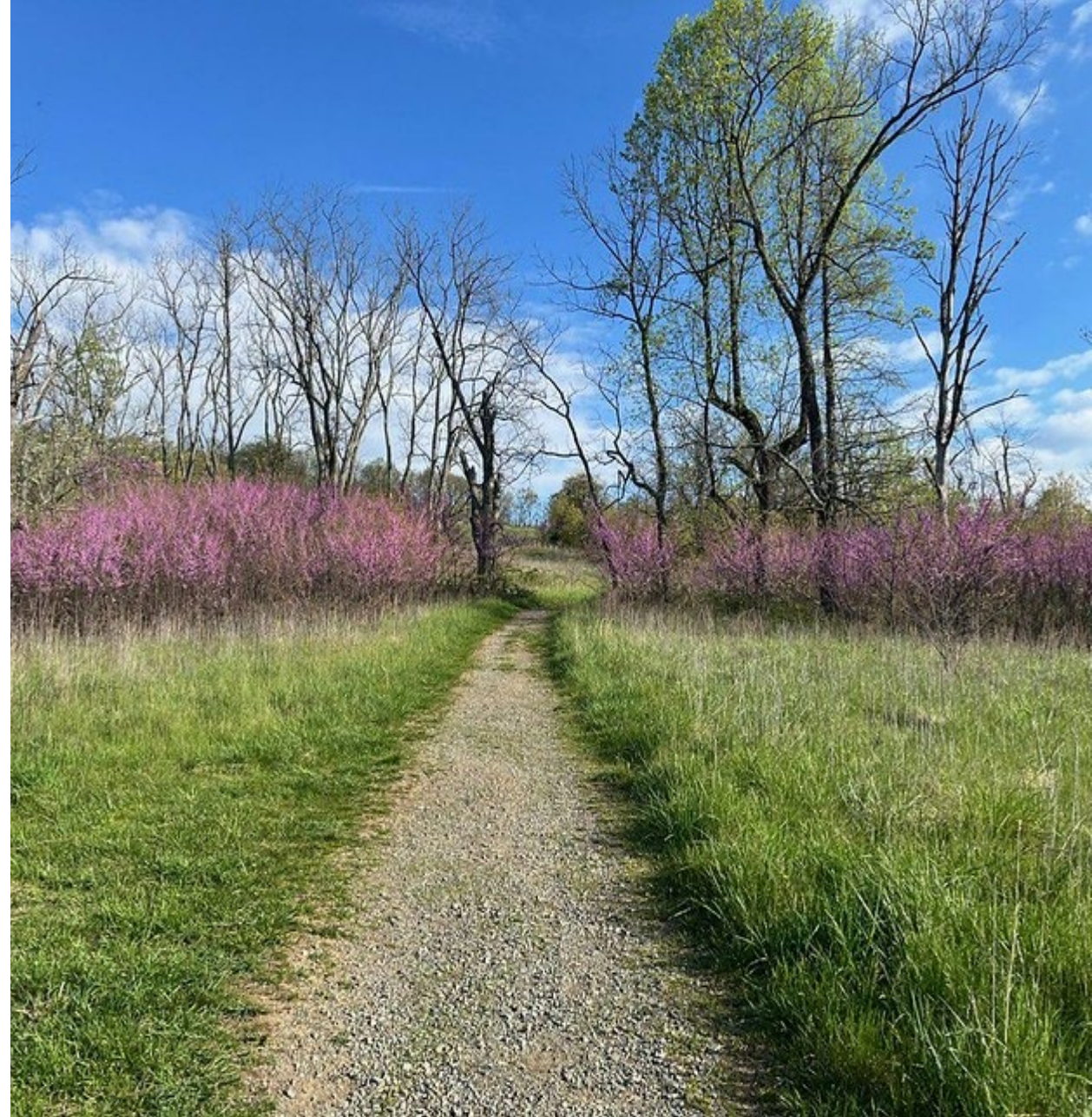
- Endeavor to have members that represent the various regions of the Commonwealth
- Stakeholders from a variety of entities across the trail community
- Subcommittees formed by STAC members at their discretion and availability to administer them



SOP Revisions Summary

Voting:

- Voting measures may be completed during meetings both in-person and virtually
- Will be done in consultation with any applicable DCR guidelines





SOP Revisions Summary

Meeting Logistics:

- The two-hour spring meeting will be held in-person
- Co-hosting at an event such as, but not limited to, the Virginia Land Conservation & Greenways Conference (VaULT)

SOP Revisions Summary

Meeting Logistics (continued):

- Fall meeting will be a 1-hour virtual business meeting
- An in-person or hybrid meeting may also be considered for the fall meeting



SOP Revisions Summary

Meeting Logistics (continued):

- Subcommittee meetings, may be conducted by STAC members
- Meeting logistics and facilitation of these additional meetings are STAC member responsibility
- Decisions made in subcommittee meetings are advisory in nature and should be brought to the attention of the entire STAC at one of the two regularly scheduled meetings.





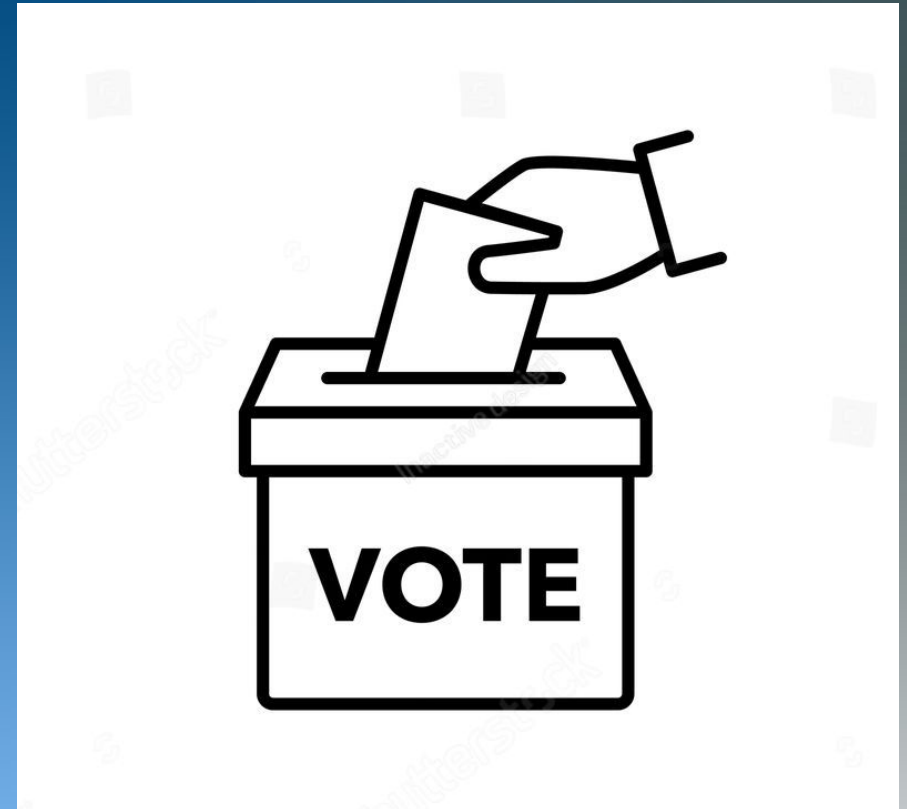
SOP Revisions Summary

Engagement Outside Regular Meetings:

- STAC members may be called upon for their feedback outside of regularly scheduled meetings
- Members of a subcommittee dealing with a particular topic may be called upon for feedback on that topic
- Feedback may be solicited via email, or during a subcommittee meeting
- Prior to any engagement the DCR will confirm STAC member contact details

SOP Vote

1. Poll on teams asks *“Should the revisions to the SOP be approved as presented?”*
2. Provide your answer (yes, no or abstain).
3. Teams will automatically tally the responses.
4. Vote will pass with majority of those present voting “yes”.





STAC Report FY 2024

Summarizes staff initiatives and STAC work for FY 2024

Link to the report on Virginia LIS

<https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2024/RD705>

1. DCR progress on Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP). VOP will be presented in a digital format.
2. Recreational Trails Program Grants for 2024 - \$2.1 million was available and twenty-nine applications were received. Next round will be in spring of 2025.
3. VDOT State Trails Office. First phase of the statewide trails plan underway and expected to be completed by fall 2024.
4. Development of context-sensitive trail design guidelines and specs underway.

STAC Report FY 2024 (cont'd)

5. STAC Progress Report. October 2023 meeting discussed survey feedback on SOP, public engagement, small-focus groups.

6. May 2024 meeting at VAULT conference. Featured two break-out sessions to discuss topics related to SOP revisions.

7. Voting to be held at Fall 2024 meeting.





Spring 2025 Meeting

- VAULT conference will be April 28-30, 2025 at The Virginian in Lynchburg
- Save the date
- Items you'd like to see on Spring agenda?

Thank you!