

Machicomoco State Park Master Plan Public Comment Meeting

November 20, 2024





Housekeeping

- Sign in sheets available
- Logistics
- There will be time at the end of the presentation for questions and comments.
- Virtual:
 - Please mute your microphone
 - Put your questions in the chat box
- Materials will be posted to DCR website after the meeting

Agenda

- Welcome and Meeting Purpose
- Recap of Progress
- Summary of Survey Results
- Summary of Draft Master Plan
- Market Study
- Additional Discussion
- Next steps and upcoming meetings
- Adjourn



Welcome to the Park



VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

District 1 - Tidewater

- BI - Belle Isle State Park
- CP - Chippokes State Park
- FC - False Cape State Park
- FL - First Landing State Park
- KP - Kiptopeke State Park
- MA - Machicomoco State Park
- YR - York River State Park

District 2 - Potomac

- CA - Caledon State Park
- CB - Culpeper Battlefields Historical State Park
- LA - Lake Anna State Park
- LE - Leesylvania State Park
- MN - Mason Neck State Park
- SN - Sweet Run State Park
- WE - Westmoreland State Park
- WW - Widewater State Park

* under development

District 3 - Shenandoah

- DO - Douthat State Park
- HF* - Hayfields State Park
- JR - James River State Park
- NB - Natural Bridge State Park
- SE - Seven Bends State Park
- SH - Shenandoah River State Park
- SK - Sky Meadows State Park

District 4 - Central

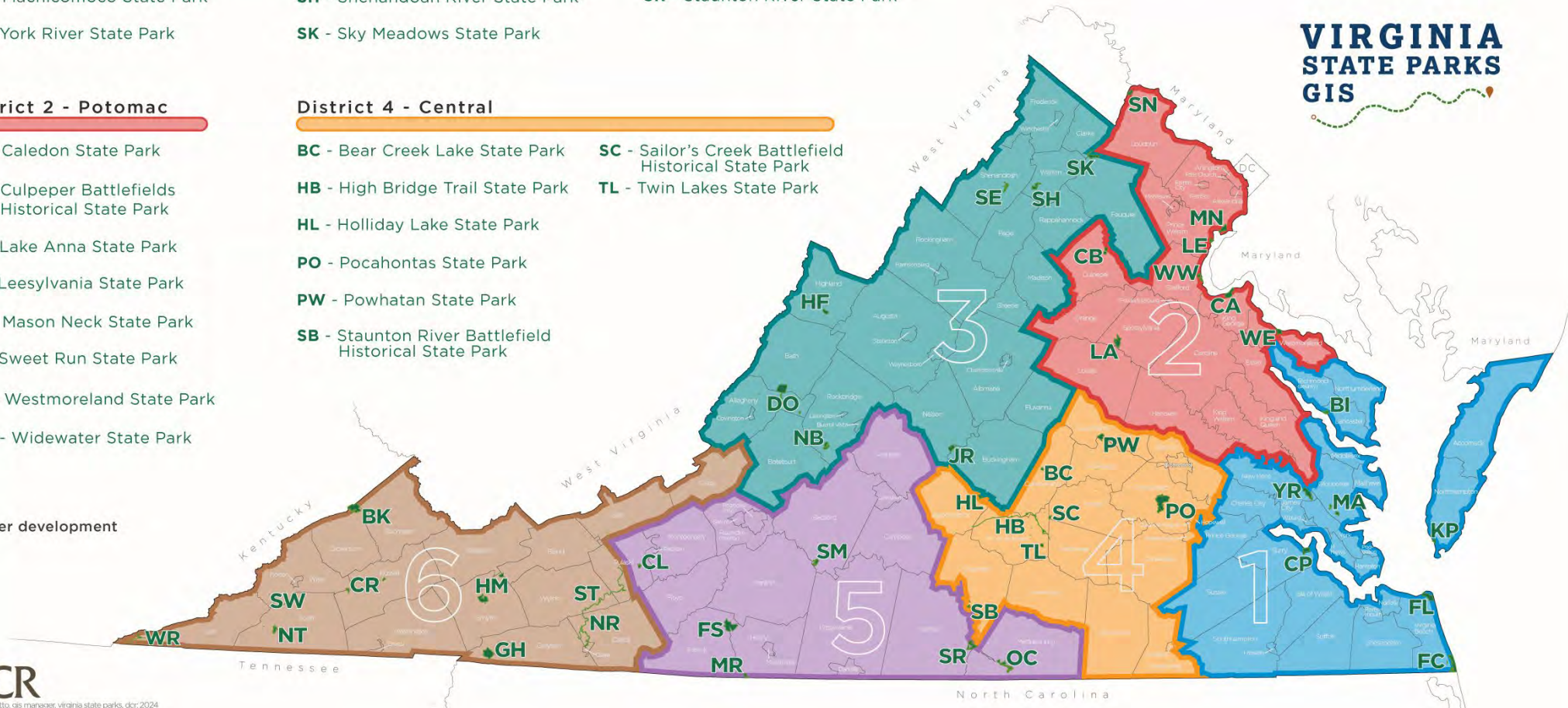
- BC - Bear Creek Lake State Park
- HB - High Bridge Trail State Park
- HL - Holliday Lake State Park
- PO - Pocahontas State Park
- PW - Powhatan State Park
- SB - Staunton River Battlefield Historical State Park
- SC - Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park
- TL - Twin Lakes State Park

District 5 - Piedmont

- CL - Claytor Lake State Park
- FS - Fairy Stone State Park
- MR* - Mayo River State Park
- OC - Occoneechee State Park
- SM - Smith Mountain Lake State Park
- SR - Staunton River State Park

District 6 - Southwest

- BK - Breaks Interstate Park
- CR - Clinch River State Park
- GH - Grayson Highlands State Park
- HM - Hungry Mother State Park
- NR - New River Trail State Park
- NT - Natural Tunnel State Park
- ST - Shot Tower Historical State Park
- SW - Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park
- WR - Wilderness Road State Park



Meeting Purpose

- Share project progress, goals, and objectives
- Present key elements of the overall park master plan including the proposed site amenities, visitor experience areas, phased development and staffing
- Give the attendees an opportunity for comment

Project Progress

Recap of Progress



State Park Master Planning Code

§ 10.1-200.1. State park master planning

- (i) for all **existing state parks**, (ii) **substantial land acquisitions**, and (iii) prior to major **improvements**
- A **guide for the development, utilization and management** of a Parks natural, cultural and historic resources
- developed in stages with public input

Project Objectives

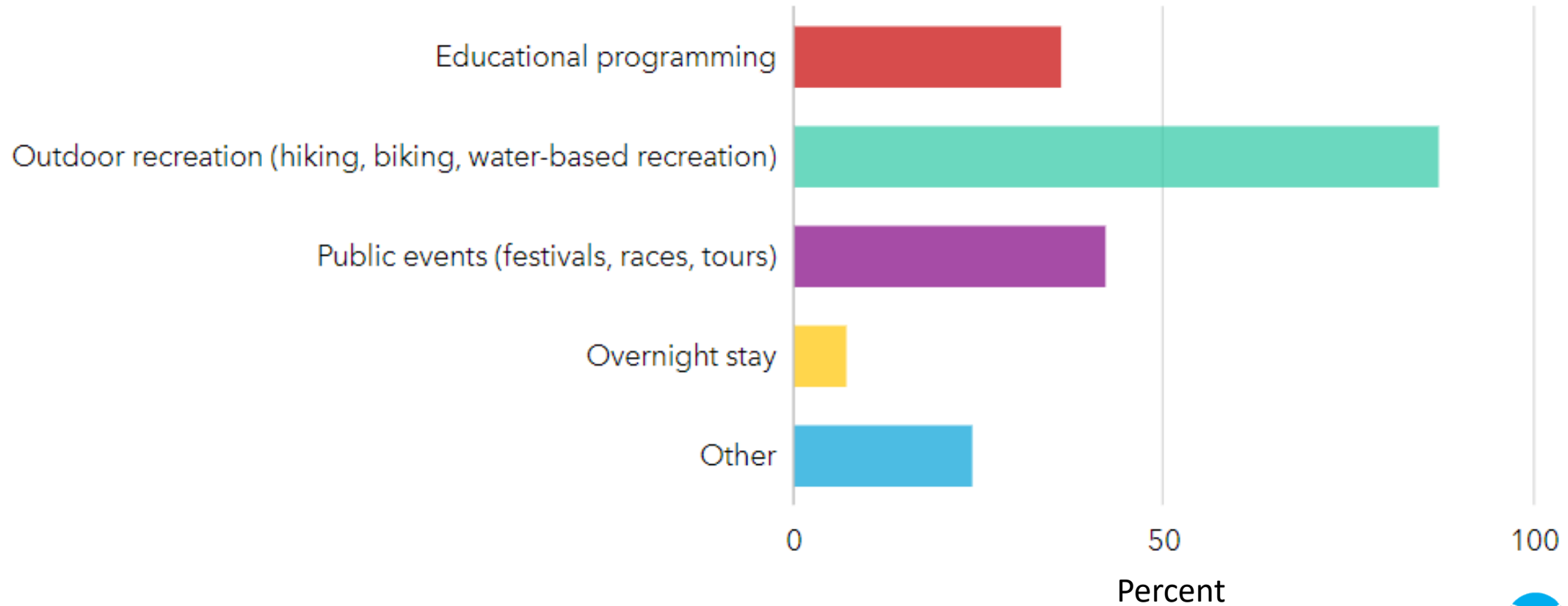
- Develop the park's master plan to address needed changes to the existing conditions and reflect the current context of the park in the local community, region and within the Virginia State Parks system, and to revise the projected phased development based on current and projected needs over the next 30-years.
- The plan will set a framework of goals, programming, and priority implementation for the development of the park and future acquisitions.

Survey Results

A landscape photograph of a wetland area. In the foreground, there is a body of water with a small island of tall, golden-brown grasses. Behind the grasses, there is a line of trees, including several tall, thin, bare trees and some green trees. The background is a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text "Survey Results" is overlaid in the upper center of the image.

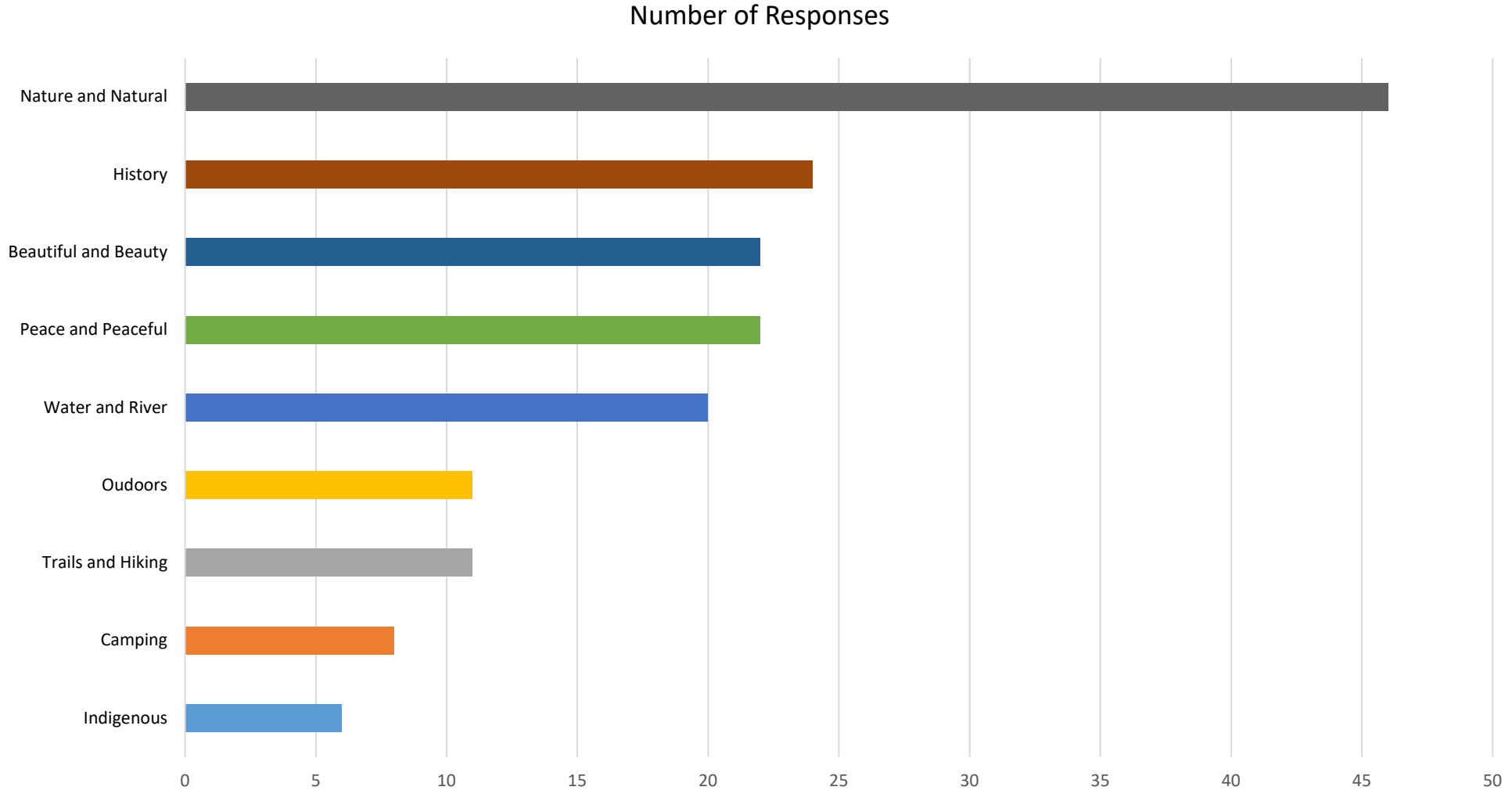
Public Information Survey Summary

- 126 Responses
- 70% Frequent or occasional visitors



Public Information Survey Summary

Words or Phrases that describe what participants value or connect to at Machicomoco:



Tribal History Responses

- That we are water people and visited the area many times
- We have long term connections to the land and waterways for thousands of years
- Our history is also defined by movement and interaction with other indigenous groups
- Adaptation to changing natural and cultural environments has allowed our community to survive for all these years
- Only the natural barriers of rivers, mountains, language, and competing trade interests defined the territorial area in which our ancestors dwelled.
- That we were signers of the Woodland Plantation treaty of 1677. We present the treaty tribute to the Governor of Virginia every year during St. George's Day



Tribal History Responses

- We still exist as a tribe and are still embracing our history and culture
- We are not stuck in the ancient past, but are thoroughly modern people who contribute to the Commonwealth in many ways
- We celebrate the recent and ongoing work that the Tribes have been leading in the management of cultural and natural resources
- Our tribal citizens have a variety of occupations including teachers, research scientists, pharmacists, lawyers, epidemiologists, aeronautical engineers, mechanics and more
- We currently own 263 acres of tribal land where our 17th century replica palisade Iroquoian fort is built



Market Study, Service Area and Economic Impacts

Market Study

- To develop a realistic expectation for development including facilities, revenues and expenditures associated with the park's operations.
- To assist park management and staff in the decision-making process.
- To focus on the financial impacts of management decisions and future expectations.
- To inform DCR management of the possible financial and economic impacts at the park.

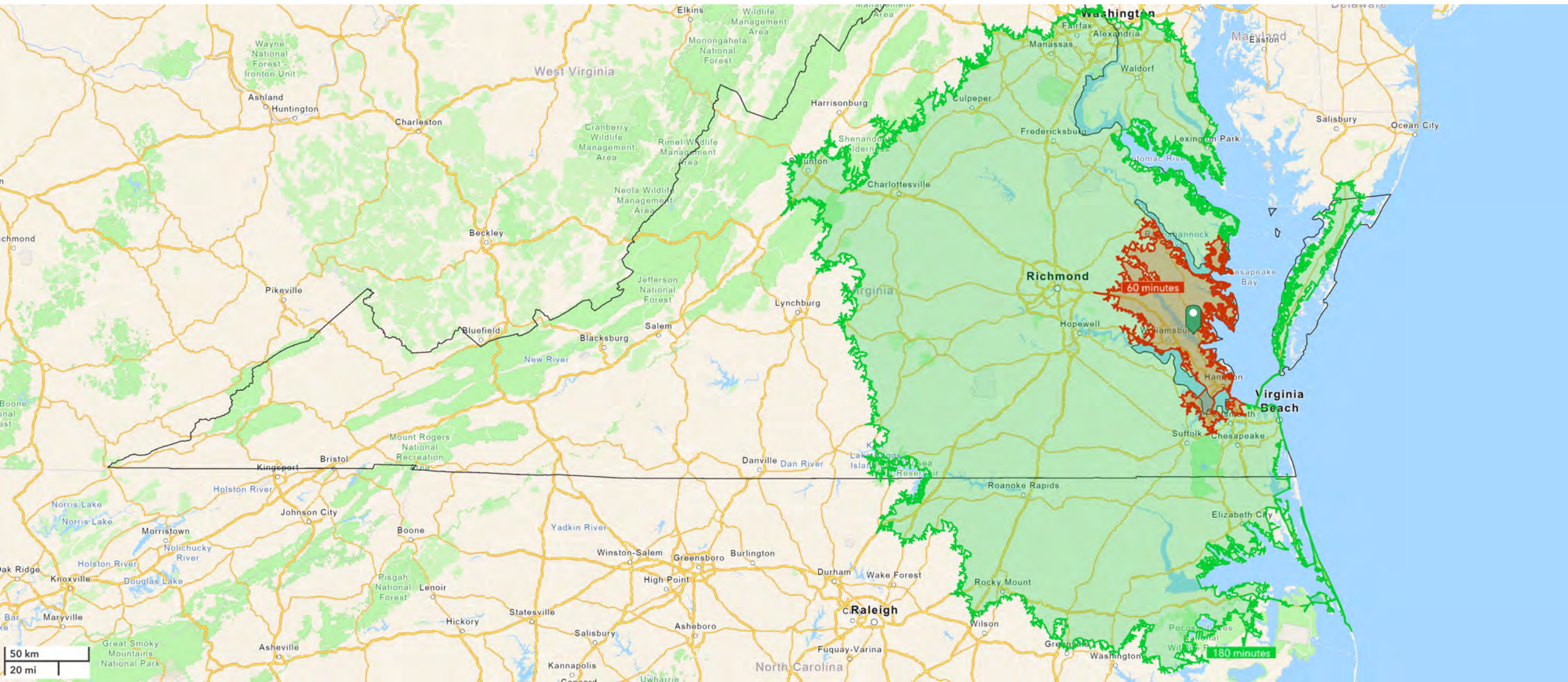




Market Study Summary

- Day use mostly Gloucester County residents and surrounding areas (see 60 minute and 180 minute drive time maps)
- Market Trends
 - Greater awareness of value of leisure – overall increased demand for leisure activities.
 - Expectation of recreation facilities – more “comfort” oriented.
 - Preference for individual or informal activities is increasing. People are looking for authentic “experiences.”
 - Participation by older adults in active recreation and sport has increased.
 - Average age of outdoor recreation participants is increasing.
 - Number of minority participants is increasing (most notably Hispanic communities).

Service Area – 1 and 3 hour drivetimes (primary and secondary service areas)





Economic Impact

- Revenues generated through parking, camping, shelter rentals, merchandise sales, and interpretive programs.
- The total economic activity years 1-5 is forecasted at \$15.7M.
- Most derived from \$4.5M spending by out-of-state.
- State and local tax revenue projected to be \$872K.
- Average of 39 jobs created each year (direct, indirect and induced.)
- Total economic impact \$11.9M



Draft Plan Summary

Visitor Experience

Park Purpose and Themes

Goals

Facilities and Staffing

Visitor Experience

Visitor Experience

Visitor Experience (VE) is a broad term encompassing the overall journey, activities and interactions of park users, as well as their personal, subjective feelings, impressions and level of satisfaction with the park

Master Planning looks at VE to understand:

- Audiences & User Groups
- User Group Wants, Needs, and Expectations
- Themes and Subthemes
- Park Purpose Statement
- Essential Experiences
- Experience Areas

Visitor Experience Themes

Main Unit Theme

Machicomoco features the culture and stories of the Indigenous peoples who first called this land home, later intertwined with Europeans and enslaved Africans that each left their mark on the landscape's rich soils, waterways and abundant wildlife.



VE Subthemes for the Main Unit

- *Indigenous culture and history*
- *European plantations and farming, including the Timberneck House*
- *Agricultural history*
- *Enslavement of Africans for plantation labor*
- *Diverse ecosystems from wetlands to upland longleaf pine forests*
- *Abundant birdlife*
- *Unique species such as the Northern Bobwhite quail and Diamond-backed Terrapins*
- *Invasive species awareness*
- *Saltwater intrusion and the “ghost islands”*
- *Longleaf pine restoration*





Visitor Experience Themes

West Unit Theme

On the northern shore of the York River, the patchwork landscape of the West unit features continual cycles of disturbance and renewal of the region's rich natural resources.

VE Subthemes for the West Unit

- *The value of wetlands*
- *Shoreline erosion and protection*
- *Diverse ecosystems from marshes to seepage swamps to upland hardwood forests*
- *Invasive species awareness*
- *Rosewell plantation and associated ruins*





Purpose Statement

Machicomoco State Park, recognized as a special meeting place by the Virginia Indian Tribes, seeks to understand and share the intertwined history, culture, and stories of Indigenous peoples, European, and enslaved Africans, ensuring their persistence into a collective future.



Audiences & User Groups

- Curriculum-Based Users
- History and Culture Enthusiasts
- Native Tribal Citizens
- Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts
- Overnight Users



Essential Experiences

Immersive Opportunities offered by the Park that visitors should enjoy to fully take in its story and resources:

- Interpretive Area
- Timberneck House
- Cartop Boat Launch Road
- The Waters around Machicomoco
- The Campground Experience
- Easy Access to Unimpaired Natural Areas
- The York River and Associated Marsh Views
- Immersive Passive Recreation on the West Unit

Machicomoco Main Unit Experience Areas

- Arrival Corridor
- Service Areas
- Primary Overnight Area
- Interpretive Area
- Longleaf Pine Management Area
- Capital Development Area
- Passive Recreation and Habitat Management Area
- Transition Area



Machicomoco West Unit Experience Areas

- Service Area
- Passive Recreation and Habitat Management Area
- Day Use Waterfront Area



Master Plan Goals, Proposed Development and Staffing

Goals

Goal 1.0 – Protect, conserve, and enhance the cultural, historic, and natural resources of the park.

Goal 2.0 – Create a welcoming and safe environment for all visitors to learn about and gain a better understanding of the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the park.

Goal 3.0 – Provide a range of **day-use and overnight** opportunities, facilities, and amenities for visitors to the park.

Goal 4.0 – Provide programming for natural, cultural, and historic education and interpretation.

Goal 5.0 – Continue to collaborate across sectors to provide mutually beneficial efforts to enhance Machicomoco State Park and the surrounding region.

Goal 6.0 – Continue to administer and manage the park professionally and transparently, which fosters the public's trust

Machicomoco Main Unit

Phase 1

- Ranger Residence, private drive and utilities (electric/water/septic)
- Maintenance Facility with multiple staff offices, housekeeping, break room, restroom(s), equipment storage, and utilities (electric/water/septic)
- Complete Loop Trail
- Longleaf Pine Management Area Trails
- Native Meadow Viewshed in Arrival Corridor
- Upgrade or Replace 3 Yurts
- Renovate Existing Ranger Residence
- Additional Short Trails i.e. Forest Trail to Shore and Pine Area
- Upgrade Overflow Parking Field at the Interpretive Area with Permeable Surfacing



Machicomoco Main Unit

Phase 2

- Visitor Center with private staff offices (admin and inter/educ), meeting and education room, and appropriate storage, parking lot, and utilities (electric/water/septic)
- Gatehouse Renovation
- Group Camp, including Pit Toilet, Potable Water and Disposal
- Second Campground with 25 E/W Sites, Full-Service Bathhouse, and Dump Station Upgrade
- Nature Playground, including Picnic Area and Open Field Play Area
- First Half of Native Meadow Development in Current Ag Areas
- First Half of New Trail System in Converted Meadow of the Passive Recreation Area
- 2+ Boardwalk Overlooks of the Meadow, including at least 1 ADA



Machicomoco Main Unit

Phase 3

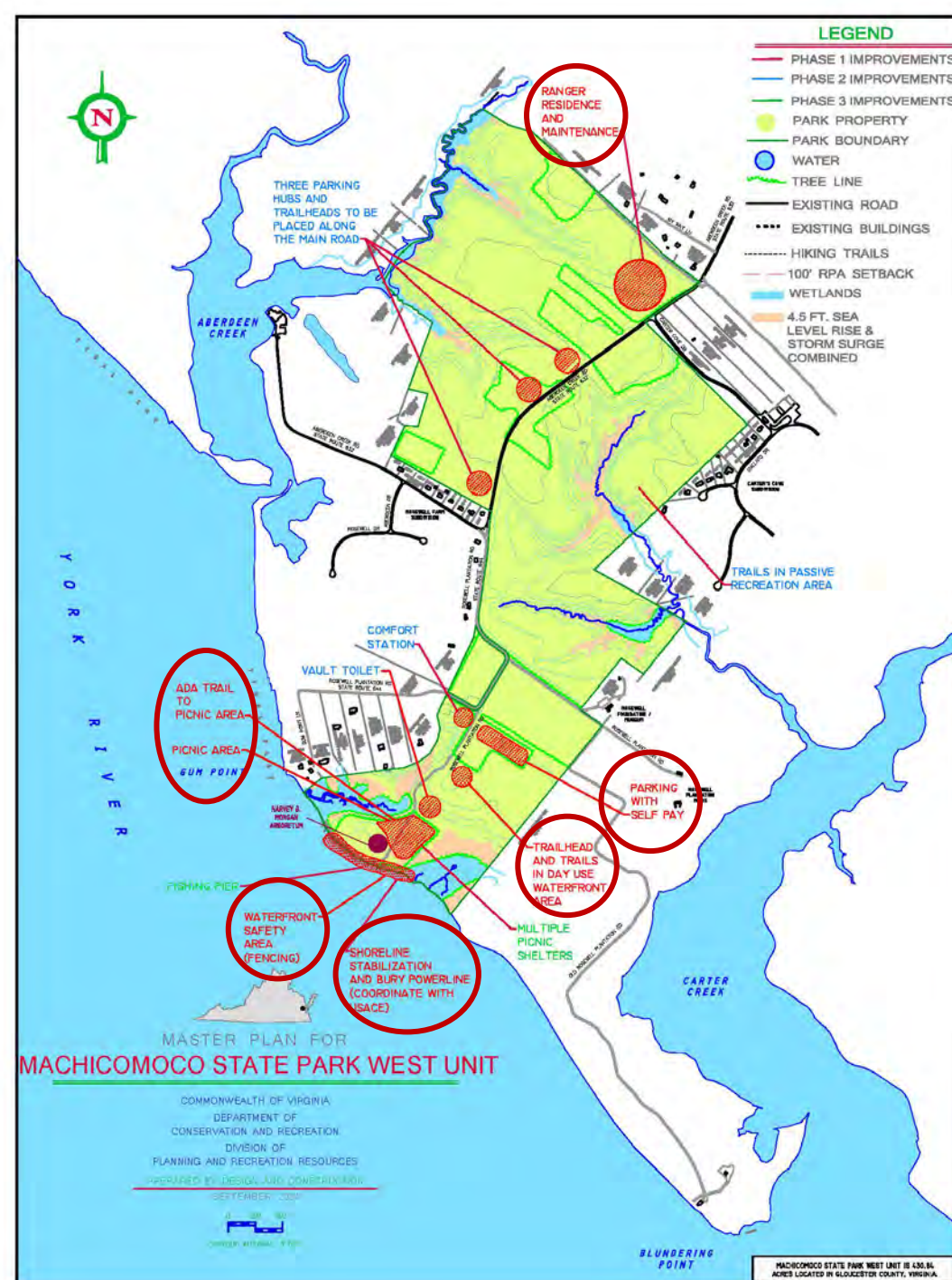
- Cabin Complex including 10 Cabins and 1 Lodge, as well as private loop road and utilities (electric/water/septic)
- Second Half of Native Meadow Development in Current Ag Areas
- Trails in Converted Meadow areas of the Passive Recreation Area
- 2+ Boardwalk Overlooks of the Meadow, including at least 1 ADA
- Outdoor Classroom and Education Space next to the Visitor Center



Machicomoco West Unit

Phase 1

- Waterfront Safety Improvements such as Fencing
- Parking with Self Pay and Trailhead
- Trails in the Day Use Waterfront Area
- Picnic Area (benches/pads), including Pit Toilet
- Burial of Waterfront Powerline
- ADA Trail to Picnic Area
- Maintenance Facility with office, breakroom, restroom, equipment storage, and utilities



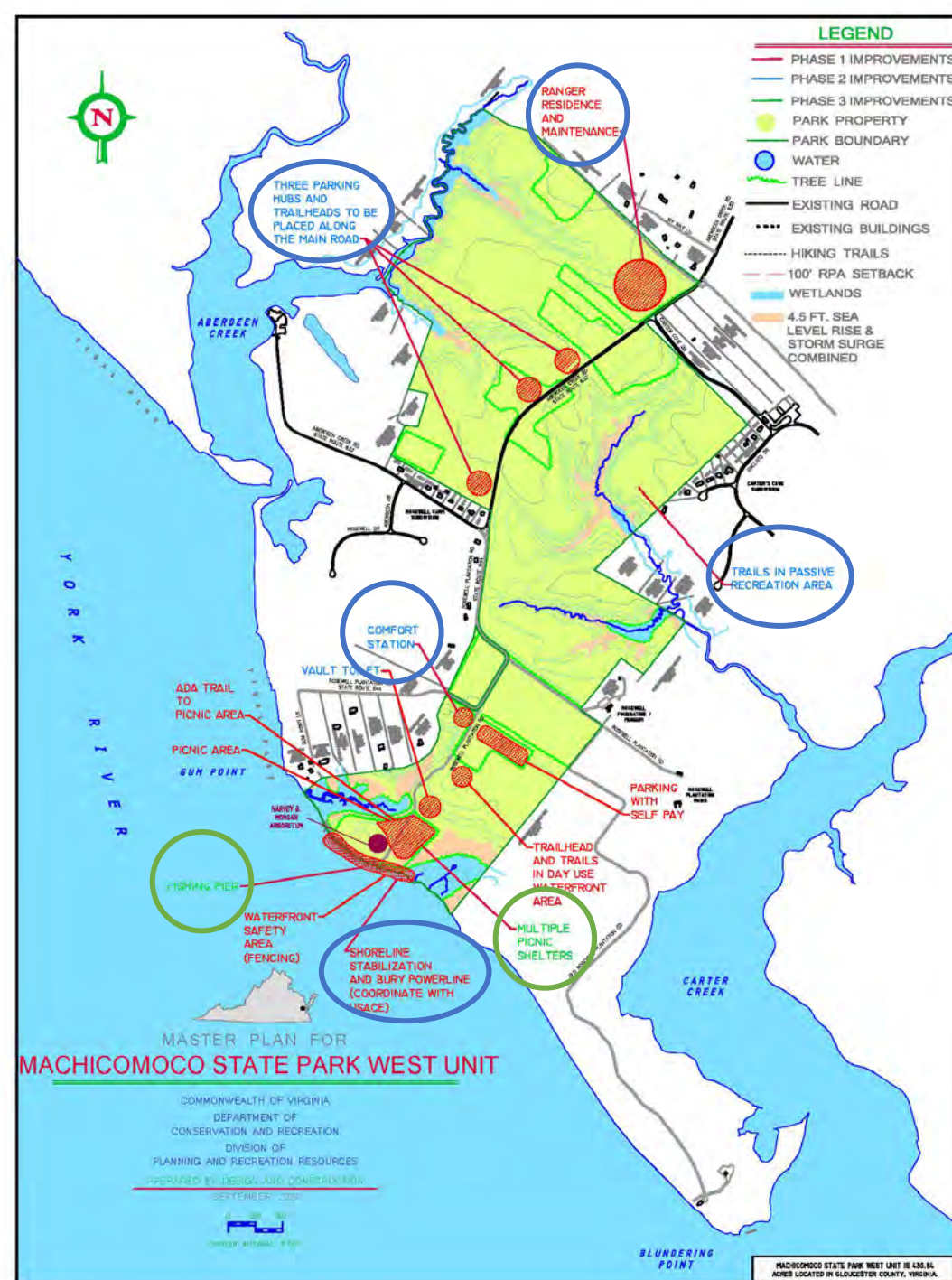
Machicomoco West Unit

Phase 2

- Ranger Residence, private drive and utilities (electric/water/septic)
- Trails in the Passive Recreation Area
- Three Parking Hubs and Trailheads
- Public Comfort Station, and utilities (electric/water/septic)
- Shoreline Stabilization and Restoration

Phase 3

- Multiple Large Picnic Shelters
- Fishing Pier



Existing Staff Positions

6 Current FTE Positions (plus Wage & Seasonal Staff):

- Park Manager
- Chief Ranger – Law Enforcement
- Chief Ranger – Visitor Experience
- Office Manager
- Park Ranger – Maintenance
- Park Ranger – Law Enforcement



Staffing Needs

Immediate

- Park Ranger – Maintenance
- Park Ranger – Resource Management

Phase 1

- No Additional Staff

Phase 2

- Assistant Park Manager
- Office Assistant
- Supervisory Park Ranger
- Volunteer Coordinator

Phase 3

- Education Specialist
- Park Ranger – Maintenance
- Park Ranger – Law Enforcement
- Park Ranger – Resource Management
- Park Ranger - Custodial

Additional Discussion

Raise your hand to be recognized

Or

Put your question in the Chat Box



Next Steps and Upcoming Meetings

Draft Master Plan content sections – PRR & SPP.

Combine sections to preliminary draft plan – PRR.

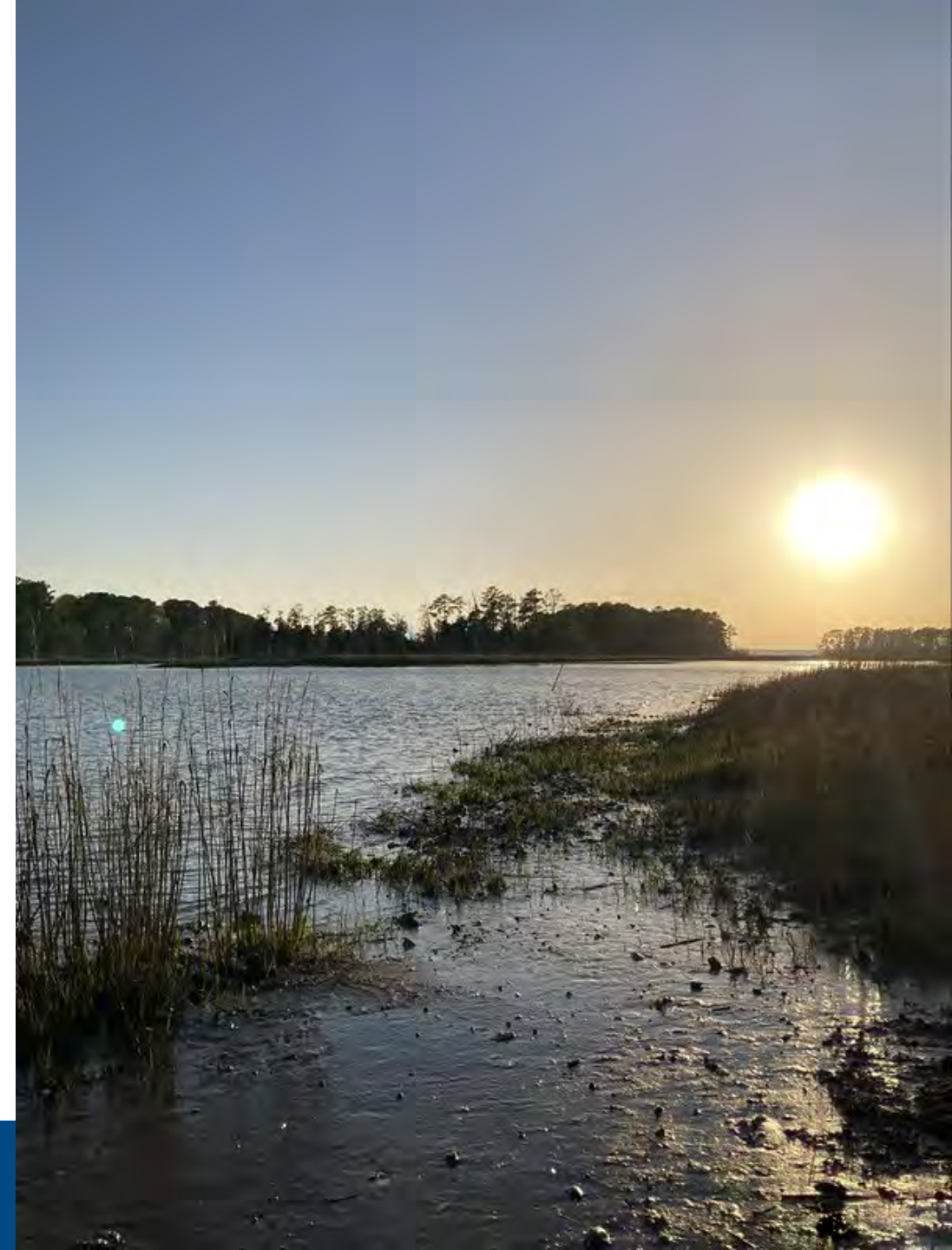
30-day comment period ending December 20, 2024

Respond to public comments and present to DCR administration for review and comment.

Presentation to Board of Conservation and Recreation.

Plan delivered to Legislature for 30-day review.

Adoption by DCR Director.



Thank You!

We value your comments, please email them to
PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov by December 20, 2024

