



REGION **7**  
*Northern  
Shenandoah Valley*

### Introduction

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Recreational Planning region includes the counties of Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah and Warren, the city of Winchester and the towns of Berryville, Boyce, Middletown, Stephens City, Luray, Shenandoah, Stanley, Edinburg, Mount Jackson, New Market, Strasburg, Toms Brook, Woodstock and Front Royal. The region sits in the northwest corner of Virginia between the Blue Ridge Mountains and Great North Mountain of the Appalachian chain. Massanutten Mountain is located in the heart of the region. All the jurisdictions in this region are part of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Heritage Area.

### Regional Focus

**Table 7.1 Most-Needed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

Northern Shenandoah Recreational Planning Region

activity	% of households in	
	region	state
Natural areas	61	54
Trails	47	43
Parks	43	49
Water access	34	43
Historic areas	31	39
Scenic drives (driving for pleasure)	29	29
Playing fields, sports and golf facilities	13	22

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey.

**Table 7.2 Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities By Participation**

Northern Shenandoah Recreational Planning Region

activity	% household
Visiting natural areas	71
Walking for pleasure	68
Driving for pleasure	65
Visiting parks (local, state & national)	61
Swimming/outdoor pool	50
Gardening	41
Freshwater fishing	38
Sunbathing/relaxing on a beach	34
Visiting working farms, petting zoos, corn mazes, etc.	34
Visiting gardens/arboretums	33

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 Northern Shenandoah Valley region:

- Implement the Winchester Green Circle.
- Develop Seven Bends State Park.
- Develop the Royal Shenandoah Greenway.
- Develop the Historic Shenandoah Valley Town and County Rail Trail.
- Develop the Fishers Hill Trail.
- Improve river access to the Shenandoah River Water Trail.

## Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact

**Table 7.3 Per-Capita Spending on Parks and Recreation**

Northern Shenandoah Recreational Planning Region

locality	dollars
Clarke County	53.32
Frederick County	63.22
Page County	3.97
Shenandoah County	18.86
Warren County	61.78
Town of Berryville	1.97
Town of Front Royal	0
Town of Luray	158.26
Town of Strasburg	20.10
City of Winchester	94.81
Statewide	71.09

Source: Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, "Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures," 2017.



Enjoy the View | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

**Table 7.4 Virginia State Parks 2017 Attendance and Economic Impact**

Northern Shenandoah Recreational Planning Region

state park	location	overnight visitors	day-use visitors	total visitors	economic impact
Shenandoah River	Warren County	52,909	232,273	285,182	\$6.0M
Seven Bends	Shenandoah County	0	0	0	\$173K

Source: Virginia State Parks



Everyone in the water! | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

## Regional Health

**Table 7.5 Health Trends**

Northern Shenandoah 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)
Clarke County	15	27	22	62	9.6
Frederick County	15	32	21	64	9.7
Page County	17	28	26	81	8.7
Shenandoah County	16	27	24	62	9.1
Warren County	17	29	21	82	9.1
City of Winchester	18	27	22	93	9.6
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 Northern Shenandoah Valley region, like the Central region, is characterized by open farmland and population centers with charming historic downtowns. The region’s historic resources reflect its reliance on agriculture and the transportation of agricultural goods, and a population that made good use of available local materials. Stone dwellings and barns are characteristic of this region, as are the neatly-balanced stone walls that define many rural property boundaries. Historic taverns, hotels and waystations can be found in the northern Valley, as can water-powered mills and remnants of sunken roads. Upland areas contain evidence of prehistoric habitation, while the wide floodplains along the Shenandoah River and its tributaries contain extensive Late Woodland village sites. The area is also home to a concentration of Civil War battlefields that in many cases remain largely undeveloped. The Northern Shenandoah Valley Region is part of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, a historic and scenic region that runs from Gettysburg to Monticello and encompasses battlefields and other historic sites of great significance to American history.

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; Civil War 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.

**Table 7.6 Regional Historic Resources**

*Northern Shenandoah Recreational Planning Region*

resource	location
Greenway Court	Clarke County
Winchester, Tom’s Brook, Cool Spring, Cedar Creek, and Fisher’s Hill Civil War Battlefields	Region-wide
Greenway Rural Historic District	Clarke and Warren Counties
Edinburg Mill	Town of Edinburg
Holy Cross Abbey	Clarke County

*Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources*

### *Land Conservation*

**Table 7.7 Conserved Lands**

*Northern Shenandoah Recreational Planning Region*

locality	easement acres	ownership acres
City of Winchester	115.27	174.41
Clarke County	24,797.49	4,033.38
Frederick County	8,598.06	7,039.24
Page County	2,957.56	65,902.32
Shenandoah County	6,623.29	77,224.93
Warren County	17,483.08	15,272.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>230,039.13</b>	

*Source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Protected Lands Inventory*

### Natural Area Preserves and Natural Heritage Resources

The Northern Shenandoah Valley region, compared with the other districts to the south, has relatively few occurrences of rare species and significant natural communities. However, areas with limestone geology have a number of significant caves with unique and rare invertebrates and endangered bats. Streams throughout the region harbor scattered populations of the state threatened wood turtle and some outstanding examples of natural communities have been identified along the Blue Ridge.

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:

- Significant caves and karst areas.
- State-threatened wood turtle habitat.
- Improve water quality in Buffalo Marsh Run.

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 7.8 Natural Area Preserves**

Northern Shenandoah Recreational Planning Region

preserve name	owner	locality
Ogdens Cave	DCR	Frederick County



Just hanging out at the park, Shenandoah River State Park | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

**Table 7.9 Natural Heritage Resources**

Northern Shenandoah Recreational Planning Region

Number of occurrences of rare species and significant natural communities	495
Number of different rare species and significant community types (natural heritage elements)	207
Number of globally rare natural heritage elements	38
Number of species listed as federally endangered or threatened	7
Number of species listed as state endangered or threatened	12
Number of terrestrial conservation sites identified by DCR	79
Number of conservation sites with little or no protection	53
Number of partially protected conservation sites	24
Number of well protected conservation sites	2