



Biscuit Run State Park
Scottsville Road (State Route 20)
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Biscuit Run State Park

MASTER PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 2017



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Biscuit Run State Park EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 2013

Presented for review at a public meeting on September 19, 2011, then recommended for adoption by the Board of Conservation and Recreation on September 11, 2013. The Virginia General Assembly then reviewed it for 30 days.

Renewed:

 /S/
Clyde E. Cristman, Director
Department of Conservation
and Recreation

October 21, 2013; revised 11/2017
Date



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BISCUIT RUN STATE PARK

Master Plan Executive Summary November 2017

As of Jan. 4, 2018, the property has been leased to Albemarle County, and any further development will be done by the county with DCR consultation.

Park Purpose Statement

The purpose of Biscuit Run State Park is:
“To engage and learn from the unique natural, scenic, historical and cultural resources of Albemarle County and the Commonwealth by connecting to urban and rural recreational and educational opportunities consistent with the good stewardship of these lands, waters and facilities that leaves them unimpaired for future generations.”

Introduction

Biscuit Run State Park is located in Albemarle County just south of the City of Charlottesville along Biscuit Run. The park consists of approximately 1,190 acres with frontage on Routes 20 and 631. The Commonwealth acquired the land from Forest Lodge LLC in December 2009. The developer had intended to construct a subdivision, as well as retail and office space, on 828 acres of the site.

There were no federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) used to acquire or develop this park. The park’s deed restricts any use of the property to outdoor recreation and conservation of scenic open space in perpetuity. Additionally, as a portion of the funding for the park was from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), there may be additional associated restrictions on development within the park boundaries. In May of 2016, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) completed a land exchange with Habitat for Humanity for property adjacent to the Southwood Community, in exchange for approximately 18 acres of undeveloped land adjacent to the park, thus extending the park boundary to the southwest.

Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville continue to attract new residents, making it one of the most highly populated areas in Virginia. As the population of Albemarle County continues to grow, demand for enjoying traditional family-oriented outdoor recreation activities and access to open space areas will be met in part by the development of Biscuit Run State Park.

Park Resource Management Plan

The resource management plan consolidates all known resource information for a park and provides management direction for maintaining and enhancing those resources. The plan identifies the physical, abiotic, and biotic characteristics of the park, and historic and archaeological resources, as well as a description of the legal constraints and limitations of the property. The park is delineated into undeveloped areas based on the ecosystems found in these areas; unique management areas that are undeveloped areas with a specific purpose or function such as a historic site or open field; and developed areas where park facilities are located yet

have natural and cultural resources requiring specific management. The plan defines management objectives and action recommendations that guide resource management and allow for continuity over time.

Biscuit Run State Park is located in the Northern Piedmont physiographic province and situated just east of the Blue Ridge. The topography is dominated by three low ridges that are incised by down-cutting ravines on their flanks and separated by broad, flat floodplains along Biscuit Run and one of its major tributaries. The site has a long history of agricultural use. Much of it was cleared at one time, and the portions that currently support the oldest forest have been cut over. The current land cover is a mosaic of old fields, some open and some in shrubs and early-successional pine – hardwood forests. Three areas of older hardwood forest occupy the higher and steeper parts of the landscape.

The banks along Biscuit Run, a stream that defines a portion of the property boundary, are high and steep. Ongoing bank erosion is a challenge to proposed facility development. Development along the bank, including wading and fishing sites will need to be built and managed through appropriate methods to create a healthier streambed. Biscuit Run is not suitable for boating or swimming.

A wide range of soil types is present on the uplands, including very sandy and stony loams on the high ridges and deeper loams and silt loams on the side slopes. Most upland soils on the site appear to be strongly to extremely acidic, with low fertility, but richer vegetation in a few spots suggests local areas of higher soil fertility. The soils within Biscuit Run State Park are marginal for most construction activities and include areas with a high water table. Electricity is located within the park, and local water and sewer infrastructure is in close proximity. Connection to public water and sewer lines is planned for Phase I development.

A Resource Management Plan, also known as the Desired Future Conditions Plan, has not yet been created for Biscuit Run State Park.

Park Visitor Experience Plan

The visitor experience plan provides a park-wide vision for the future of interpretation, education, recreation and other visitor experience opportunities. The plan addresses all elements of a park that affect visitor experiences, including programming, media, facilities, and landscapes. It is a conceptual document that lays a foundation for subsequent phases of comprehensive interpretive planning such as interpretive exhibits and annual interpretive plans.. Interpretive themes are developed for the park with stakeholder input and should reflect the main stories of the site. The primary theme encompasses the overall park story. It is the single most important message all park guests should receive and remember. Secondary themes are important messages related to the parks natural, cultural and historic resources that should be presented to park guests. Any other sub-themes and topics that may be interpreted at the park should be linked to these secondary themes.

The visitor experience plan has two components and is created through the collaborative efforts of park staff and community stakeholders. The foundation section identifies significant park resources, audiences, issues and influences, and park themes, which summarize the most important stories of the site. Also included in this section is the park purpose, agency mission statement, and goals and objectives. The desired future conditions section uses this foundation to

create a list of suggested and appropriate actions that will enhance guest experiences and lend direction to interpretive staff.

A visitor experience plan has not yet been created for Biscuit Run State Park.

Park Master Plan

This original master plan for Biscuit Run State Park was developed in accordance with the master planning process set forth in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. An advisory committee comprised of Albemarle County and Charlottesville residents, adjacent landowners, government officials, user groups, and local businesses helped craft a master plan with the guidance of the public. As part of the development of the park master plan, goals and objectives and a park purpose statement were developed. The purpose statement for Biscuit Run is:

“To engage and learn from the unique natural, scenic, historical and cultural resources of Albemarle County and the Commonwealth by connecting to urban and rural recreational and educational opportunities consistent with the good stewardship of these lands, waters and facilities that leaves them unimpaired for future generations.”

Proposed park facility development includes day-use, overnight and trail facilities. Phase I of the three-phase development plan for Biscuit Run State Park includes basic infrastructure: roads, trails, utilities, maintenance and administrative facilities; day-use recreation areas; and a discovery/visitor center. Non-motorized trails, picnicking, playgrounds, and play areas will attract day-use visitors. Plans for later phases include a multi-purpose pavilion/amphitheater, additional trails, and overnight accommodations.

Park Attendance, Economic Impact and Park Revenues

Biscuit Run State Park has not opened to the public. There is no recorded park attendance, revenue or economic impact information available. Many visitors are expected to visit Biscuit Run once the park is developed, thus providing a variety of economic benefits to the community and the state at large. There will be positive economic impacts from development costs, permanent and seasonal jobs, and general expenditures of visitors in the park and the surrounding area. At the completion of Biscuit Run’s Phase I development the annual park and visitor spending is estimated at approximately \$1.8 million plus creation of an additional 32 jobs. Of this, approximately \$992,470 is estimated to be the local economic benefit.¹ Master plan recommendations designed to increase visitation and improve the visitor experience, once implemented, should further enhance the region’s economic vitality. The park is in close proximity to the City of Charlottesville and the many miles of planned park and connecting trails will provide popular close to home trail access for area residents. Overnight facilities will help attract visitors from throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

¹ Estimates made by DCR staff utilizing the National Park Service’s Money Generation Model Version 2 (MGM2) and MGM2 Park Operation Impact Estimator (Daniel Stynes, Dennis Propst, We-Huei Chang, Ya-Yen Sun; Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, Michigan State University, 2007). Inputs for visitation and operating expenditures were drawn from historical patterns observed at existing Virginia state parks. Inputs for capital expenditures were drawn from the Biscuit Run master plan.

Existing Facilities

There are no existing facilities at Biscuit Run State Park. There is a system of existing unpaved trails and single lane farm roads that provide access to various areas of the park. These roads and trails could be upgraded to provide access for park visitors and for park maintenance and management.

Connectivity

Biscuit Run State Park is located just outside of Charlottesville in Albemarle County where extensive efforts are ongoing to connect the area via trails. The park is not far from U.S. Bicycle Route 76 along Virginia Byway Route 20, a proposed route for the James River Heritage Trail. A shared-use path along the Route 20 corridor would provide a multitude of connections for local citizens and visitors to access various venues in the region. A trail along Route 631, Old Lynchburg Turnpike, would provide a connection to Walnut Hill Park south of the park. North of the park, a future trail along Biscuit Run Creek could connect to the Southwood Property and pass under Interstate 64 to connect to the Rivanna Trail network.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

No federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) were used to acquire or develop Biscuit Run State Park. However, the park's deed restricts any use of the property to outdoor recreation and conservation of scenic open space in perpetuity. Additionally, as a portion of the funding for the park was from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), there may be additional associated restrictions on development within the park boundaries and any change in ownership must be cleared through the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

To the greatest extent possible, Virginia State Parks strives to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Land Acquisition/Viewshed Protection

Additional land acquisition is recommended to enhance park offerings, establish connective trail easements/corridors, buffer the park from inappropriate development and/or protect valued viewsheds. Future land acquisitions will only be negotiated with willing property owners. The placement of conservation easements on adjacent property to preserve the natural resources, cultural landscapes, and scenic resources in close proximity to the park will be encouraged. In working cooperatively with neighboring landowners, the park will be enhanced and protected over time.

Environmental/Design Guidance

This 2017 master plan update describes proposed facilities and improvements to existing infrastructure. New facilities are sited to minimize impact to the park, and in keeping with the prescriptive management areas as defined by the Park Resource Management Plan and the guidelines of the Park Visitor Experience Plan, when available. New facilities at this park should be designed and built with consideration to existing natural and historic resources. These facilities will be carefully sited to minimize impacts to the views in the park and of the park from adjacent lands and water bodies. Consideration will be given to eliminate excessive, misdirected or obtrusive artificial light in the park in order to maximize the dark sky effect and encourage astronomy and night-sky viewing. Building and site design will implement green energy

standards using energy-efficient and sustainable materials and processes to the greatest extent possible. Green design initiatives will be considered during the design process for park renovations and new construction. Development activities will comply with requirements set forth by the Department of Environmental Quality's best management practices for erosion, sediment control and stormwater management in order to protect water quality. A setback guideline of 100 feet from the shoreline has been established by DCR, and trails and water dependent facilities will be the only developments permitted within the 100-foot setback. There are potential challenges of overuse and crowded conditions, which may require management actions to protect the resources and the quality of the park experience. Issues related to resource carrying capacity and social carrying capacity should be evaluated prior to developing new facilities.

Phased Development Plan

Proposed developments for the Park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan), and covers a 30-year timeframe. The phasing costs are based on 2014 cost estimates.

The development plan has three phases. Phase 1 is primarily focused in the eastern portion of the park beginning with access from Route 20, Scottsville Road, the main entrance to the park. The other phases, as listed below, expand the footprint of the park to the north and west (see Map).

Phase 1

- Contact Station
- Park office/overnight registration
- Maintenance area
- Roads with walk – bicycle shoulder
- Staff residences (2)
- Discovery/Visitor Center with shelter and parking for cars and buses
- Picnic area (no shelters) with restroom and parking
- Playground at picnic area
- Water and sewer connection
- Trails – primarily for walk-in pedestrians
- Dam rehabilitation for pond
- Amphitheater economic study

The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$15,472,346.

Phase 2

- Amphitheater and multi-purpose pavilion and shared car parking
- Picnic shelters (4)
- Pedestrian and bike trailhead with parking
- Campground – 30 sites
- Water feature (spray ground and la-z river)
- Staff residence (1)

The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$13,357,825.

Phase 3

- Equestrian parking and trails
- 20 cabins (1-6 bedroom, 12-2 bedroom and 7-3 bedroom)
- Road connection to cabins (across Biscuit Run)
- Linen facility in cabin area

- Staff residence near cabin area (1)

The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$13,652,670.

The total cost to bring Biscuit Run State Park to its desired condition is \$42,482,840.

Staffing and Operations

Staffing and operational costs for the new Biscuit Run State Park are based on fiscal year 2014 budget projections. Each development phase has specific staffing needs and operational costs. In addition, each phase will have one-time expenses for vehicles, tractors, mowers, weed eaters, communications equipment, and other equipment associated with new staff and facility operations.

The total cost for Phase 1 development including salaries for five (5) permanent staff, wage, Other than Personnel Services (OTPS) expenses, and one-time costs is \$723,000. At complete build-out of all three proposed phases, an estimated \$1,096,000 in annual operating costs will be needed, which includes salaries for eleven (11) permanent staff. The total one-time cost for all three phases is \$518,000. Without the projected staffing, operating and one-time costs for the three development phases, there will be insufficient funds or staff to adequately operate the park at full build-out. The total cost to operate Biscuit Run State Park at full build-out is projected to be \$1,614,000.

| Biscuit Run State Park – Operating and Staffing | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| PHASE 1 | PHASE 2 | PHASE 3 | FULL BUILD OUT |
| STAFFING | | | STAFFING |
| Park Manager | | | Park Manager |
| | Asst. Park Mgr | | Asst. Park Mgr |
| Chief Ranger | | Chief Ranger | Chief Ranger (2) |
| | Educ. Specialist | | Educ. Specialist |
| Park Ranger (2) | Park Ranger | Park Ranger | Park Ranger (4) |
| | | Housekeeper | Housekeeper |
| Office Manager | | | Office Manager |
| SALARY TOTAL | SALARY TOTAL | SALARY TOTAL | SALARY TOTAL |
| \$276,000 | \$167,000 | \$150,000 | \$536,000 |
| WAGE TOTAL | WAGE TOTAL | WAGE TOTAL | WAGE TOTAL |
| \$65,000 | \$59,000 | \$116,000 | \$240,000 |
| OTPS TOTAL | OTPS TOTAL | OTPS TOTAL | OTPS TOTAL |
| \$87,000 | \$29,000 | \$147,000 | \$263,000 |
| ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS | ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS | ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS | ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS |
| \$428,000 | \$255,000 | \$413,000 | \$1,096,000 |
| ONE TIME COSTS* | ONE TIME COSTS* | ONE TIME COSTS* | ONE TIME COSTS* |
| \$295,000 | \$91,000 | \$132,000 | \$518,000 |
| TOTAL COSTS | TOTAL COSTS | TOTAL COSTS | TOTAL COSTS |
| \$723,000 | \$346,000 | \$545,000 | \$1,614,000 |

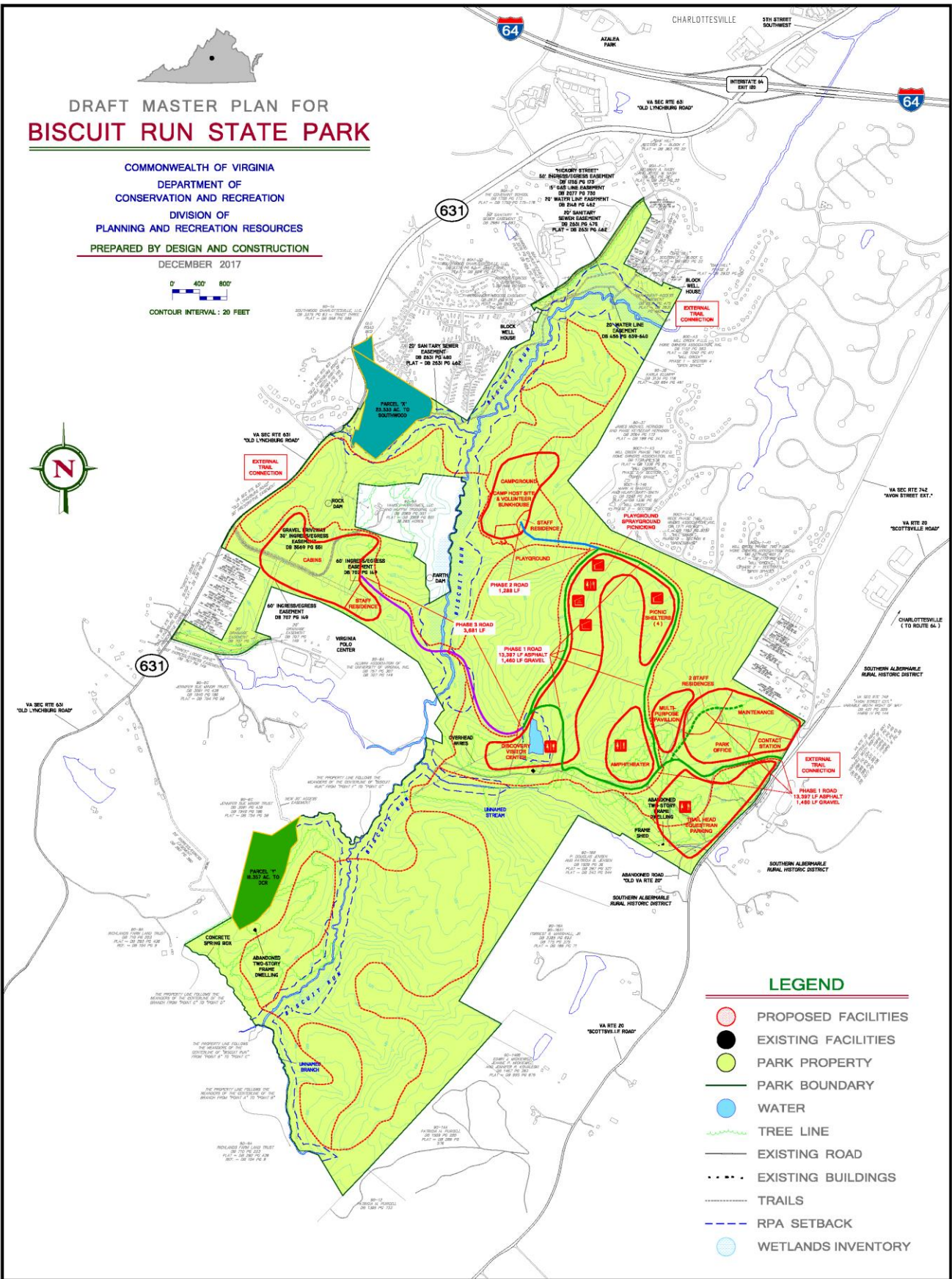
NOTE – All costs (salary, wage, OTPS (Other than Personnel Services)) are based on FY14 budget projections.

* One time operational expenses for vehicles, tractors, mowers, weed eaters, communications equipment, and other equipment associated with new staff and facility operations.



DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR BISCUIT RUN STATE PARK

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
DIVISION OF
PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES
PREPARED BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
DECEMBER 2017



LEGEND

- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK PROPERTY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- WATER
- ~ TREE LINE
- EXISTING ROAD
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- TRAILS
- RPA SETBACK
- WETLANDS INVENTORY