



REGION **14**
Commonwealth



On the trail again | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Introduction

The Commonwealth Recreational Region includes the counties Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Prince Edward and the towns of Blackstone, Burkeville, Charlotte Court House, Crewe, Dillwyn, Drakes Branch, Farmville, Kenbridge, Victoria, Phenix and part of Pamplin. The region also includes Nottoway and Cumberland counties. This region lies in Virginia’s Piedmont physiographic province. Rolling terrain and a rural countryside are the region’s dominant characteristics.

Regional Focus

Table 14.1 Most-Needed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Commonwealth Recreational Planning Region

activity	% of households in	
	region	state
Parks	58	49
Natural areas	55	54
Historic areas	46	39
Water access	38	43
Trails	37	43
Scenic drives (driving for pleasure)	29	29
Playing fields, sports and golf facilities	26	22

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey

Table 14.2 Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities By Participation

Commonwealth Recreational Planning Region

activity	% household
Driving for pleasure	61
Freshwater fishing	58
Visiting natural areas	56
Walking for pleasure	54
Visiting parks (local, state & national)	43
Sunbathing/relaxing on a beach	32
Swimming/outdoor pool	32
Hunting	31
Gardening	31
Music festivals	28

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey. Visit 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 Commonwealth region:

- Implement the James River Heritage Trail.
- Implement the Tobacco Heritage Trail.
- Develop the Appomattox Water Trail.
- Develop the Virginia Music Trail.
- Construct High Bridge Trail State Park connections.
- Develop the Roanoke River Water Trail.

Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact

Table 14.3 Per-Capita Spending on Parks and Recreation

Commonwealth Recreational Planning Region

locality	dollars
Amelia County	21.07
Buckingham County	11.63
Charlotte County	1.12
Cumberland County	7.79
Lunenburg County	0
Nottoway County	1.20
Prince Edward County	4.08
Town of Blackstone	0
Town of Farmville	68.13
Statewide	71.09

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



Historic Farmville | Virginia Tourism Corp.

Table 14.4 Virginia State Parks 2017 Attendance and Economic Impact*Commonwealth Recreational Planning Region*

state park	location	overnight visitors	day-use visitors	total visitors	economic impact
Bear Creek Lake	Cumberland County	57,763	38,225	95,988	\$3.8M
High Bridge Trail	Appomattox, Cumberland, Nottoway, Prince Edward counties; town of Farmville	0	191,895	191,895	\$6.7M
Holliday Lake	Appomattox, Buckingham counties	16,734	33,201	49,935	\$1.9M
James River	Buckingham County	38,853	86,401	125,254	\$3.3M
Sailor's Creek	Amelia, Nottoway counties	0	37,313	37,313	\$1.0M
Staunton River	Halifax County	27,640	113,587	141,227	\$3.5M
Staunton River Battlefield	Halifax, Charlotte counties	-	35,722	35,722	\$1.7M
Twin Lakes	Prince Edward County	19,158	110,354	129,512	\$4.7M

Source: Virginia State Parks

Regional Health

Table 14.5 Health Trends*Commonwealth 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)
Amelia County	16	29	27	28	8.5
Buckingham County	19	34	34	20	8.4
Charlotte County	19	34	29	20	8.6
Cumberland County	19	32	23	36	8.3
Lunenburg County	20	28	26	18	8.5
Nottoway County	21	34	28	31	8.5
Prince Edward County	19	32	23	70	8.4
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 2014. In 2017, Virginia Tourism compiled “Nature & Outdoors” recommendations in Appendix 13 for each recreation planning region.

Regional Historic Resources

While the Commonwealth region has a similar early history and development to that of other Southside and Piedmont regions in terms of its agricultural and transportation heritage, this area is unique because of its integral role in the movement for American civil rights. The town of Farmville is home to the Robert Russa Moton High School, a National Historic Landmark, which witnessed the birth of the modern civil rights movement for African-American and Native American students. The Moton School also serves as an anchor for the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail which memorializes similar buildings and sites all over the region that were significant in fulfilling the vision that all students should have equal opportunity to an education. Many historic farmsteads and communities include both manor houses and the homes of enslaved persons and tenants, and extensive evidence for indigenous occupation prior to European settlement can be found.

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; historic schools and churches; historic transportation routes and crossroads, sites and properties associated with enslaved persons/communities; 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 14.6 Regional Historic Resources

Commonwealth Recreational Planning Region

resource	location
Robert Russa Moton School	Town of Farmville
Old Prince Edward County Clerk’s Office	Prince Edward County
Patrick Henry’s Red Hill Plantation	Charlotte County
High Bridge	Cumberland County
Nottoway County Courthouse	Nottoway County

Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources



Dinner is served | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Land Conservation

Table 14.7 Conserved Lands

Commonwealth Recreational Planning Region

locality	easement acres	ownership acres
Amelia County	19,199.73	2,521.07
Buckingham County	6,634.88	17,762.41
Charlotte County	10,517.66	781.58
Cumberland County	3,622.05	16,659.41
Lunenburg County	8,479.47	500.00
Nottoway County	1,750.70	25,912.45
Prince Edward County	9,289.41	11,386.21
Total		135,017.03

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

Natural Area Preserves and Natural Heritage Resources

While Commonwealth Regional Council Planning District is one of two districts in Virginia that lack a dedicated natural area preserve, the district has some highly significant sites supporting biodiversity. Some highlights include part of the world’s largest population of the federally endangered Michaux’s sumac, outstanding examples of several forest and woodland community types, granite flatrock communities and remnant populations of globally rare mussels.

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:

- Additional buffer lands around Fort Pickett
- Significant communities and rare species habitats along the Nottoway River in Lunenburg and Nottoway counties
- Piedmont hardpan forest and Piedmont savannah communities
- Granite flatrock communities

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 14.8 Natural Heritage Resources

Commonwealth Recreational Planning Region

Number of occurrences of rare species and significant natural communities	206
Number of different rare species and significant community types (natural heritage elements)	96
Number of globally rare natural heritage elements	25
Number of species listed as federally endangered or threatened	6
Number of species listed as state endangered or threatened	12
Number of terrestrial conservation sites identified by DCR	43
Number of conservation sites with little or no protection	39
Number of partially protected conservation sites	4
Number of well protected conservation sites	0

Information as of Feb. 28, 2018. Source: Virginia Natural Heritage Program