



# Virginia Scenic Rivers Program 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary **Fact Sheet**

- 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program.
- The intent of the program is to identify, recognize and provide a level of protection to rivers with significant scenic, historic, recreational and natural values.
- The Virginia Scenic Rivers Program is administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- In the late 1960s, Virginians and their elected representatives in the General Assembly sought to identify and protect the most outstanding examples of Virginia's rivers and streams. Their efforts resulted in the 1970 passage of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Act, which established a legislative framework for recognizing rivers with significant scenic, natural, historic and recreational qualities.
- The Virginia Scenic Rivers System is composed of 33 rivers or river segments for a combined 860 miles (as of December 2019).
- Each was studied and evaluated on a set of criteria including streambed or stream flow modifications, development in the visual corridor, water quality, quality of fisheries, landscape, historic features, recreational access and land conservation.
- Scenic river studies are typically requested by local governments. If a river qualifies for scenic designation, the local governing body must approve a supporting resolution, and support a bill to be introduced in the General Assembly. The final step in the designation process is signing of the bill by the governor.
- The Virginia Scenic Rivers Program has advocates across the state, including these established committees: the Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee, the Catoctin Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee and the Goose Creek Scenic Advisory Committee.

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