

Introduction

The Hampton Roads Planning District (Region 23) covers approximately 2,500 square miles and is home to more than 1.6 million people. This region encompasses 22 local governments, including the counties of Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton and York. While both Gloucester and Surry counties are a part of the Hampton Roads Planning District, each shares membership in other planning district commissions. Surry County is a part of the Crater Planning District, and information about Surry is included in Region 19. Gloucester County is a part of the Middle Peninsula Planning District, and information about Gloucester is included in Region 18. Other localities included in this planning district include: the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg; and the towns of Boykins, Branchville, Capron, Courtland, Ivor, Newsoms, Smithfield and Windsor.

Future growth in the region is anticipated to be rapid, with the population in the region projected to increase to 1.7 million by 2020. Expected growth rates for Chesapeake, James City, Isle of Wight and York counties are 22 percent, 38 percent, 21 percent and 30 percent, respectively. In addition, the City of Suffolk is anticipated to have a growth rate of 27 percent by 2020. Remaining counties' and cities' growth rates are steady, but under 20 percent. Hispanic populations in the region continue to expand. Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg all have populations of Hispanic ethnicity that are more than 3 percent.

Region 23 lies in the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain. Three major river drainage systems in the region include the York, James and Chowan basins. To the east, the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay form an undulating natural boundary for the region. The predominant features of the region include coastal shorelines, vast expanses of open water, and marshlands and swamps. Most portions of the James and York rivers in the region are estuarine. Freshwater systems in the region include the Nottoway, Blackwater, Meherrin, North Landing and Northwest rivers, Back Bay, and the Dismal Swamp. The waterways form diverse natural systems provide excellent habitats, as well as opportunities for boating, picnicking, camping, swimming and other outdoor enjoyment.

The expanse of water and outdoor opportunities associated with the coastal landscapes of the region offer abundant outdoor recreation. Whether it is exploring history, cultural activities, playing sports, boating, canoeing, enjoying the scenic beauty of rural landscapes and protected natural areas, discovering the diverse natural areas, or becoming involved in an educational or interpretive opportunity, Hampton Roads offers a great variety of experiences for everyone. This region has a wealth of biodiversity and is home to one third of the rare, threatened and endangered plants in the Commonwealth.

The region relies heavily on its water resources for economic well-being. The City of Virginia Beach is one of the major destination beach areas for visitors on the East Coast. In the western part of the region, rural counties have received less development pressure to date. Isle of Wight, while still predominantly rural, is experiencing increased growth pressure. Other urban communities in the region continue to experience development and redevelopment and are, in part, magnets for growth occurring in surrounding communities.

Because the Hampton Roads Planning District is heavily populated, urban issues with regard to parks and recreational opportunities need to be considered. Excellent conservation practices are critical in this urban environment. Planning in urban population areas should include alternative transportation modes, especially for populations without access to personal vehicles. Because open space and leisure activities are important to quality of life, so is the availability of a variety of recreational experiences. Since major state and regional park systems, which offer large areas of open space and natural area experiences, are not typically located in urban settings, greenways, urban open spaces and stream valleys can be blended into systems to meet some of the demand for natural and passive areas in urban settings.

For more information on the region and a specific report on the region's open space and parks, visit www.odu.edu/bpa/forecasting/sor2006.shtml

The Old Dominion University Economic
Forecasting Project
2006 State of the Region Report

Recommendations applicable to all regions are found in chapters III through IX. To meet needs established in the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)*, it is important to integrate these recommendations with those that follow for Region 23 into regional and local planning and development strategies.

Outdoor recreation

For a general discussion of outdoor recreation trends, issues and planning considerations in Virginia, see Chapter II: Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings, and Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Planning and Related Issues.

Currently, the most popular activities in the region are outdoor beach use, walking, bicycling and boating. The most pressing recreational needs in this region are additional boating facilities and public access to beaches. Additional walking trails and playgrounds within walking distance of most populations are also needed. Large tracts of land are in demand for hunting and horseback riding. Both indoor and outdoor swimming facilities, golf courses, fitness trails and tennis courts are needed and could be provided in part by private sector initiatives close to neighborhoods. With traffic congestion becoming an increasing concern in Hampton Roads, the demand for bicycling facilities to meet both commuter and student needs is increasing (See Table X-21).

All counties but Southampton County in Region 23 have full-time parks and recreation departments and all cities. While private organizations may provide recreation programming for Southampton in the short term, they are not charged with planning for the long term recreation, park and open space needs of a community.

According to the Commonwealth of Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, *Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures* (year ended June 30, 2005), per capita spending on parks and recreation for each locality in this region was: City of Chesapeake, \$35.56; City of Hampton, \$121.59; City of Newport News, \$103.85; City of Norfolk, \$67.01; City of Poquoson, \$97.54; City of Portsmouth, \$97.54; City of Suffolk, \$63.16; City of Virginia Beach, \$52.67; City of Williamsburg, \$123.44; Isle of Wight County, \$30.84; James City County, \$84.87; Southampton County, \$00.00; and York County, \$24.30. The City of Franklin was not listed in the report. This compares to

a statewide per capita spending on parks and recreation of \$55.31, including \$85.51 from towns, \$43.75 from counties, and \$76.45 from cities.

Land conservation

A detailed discussion on statewide awareness of the need for conservation of farmland, parks, natural areas, and historical and cultural resources is found in Chapter III: Land Conservation. Conservation lands in the region are shown Map X-42.

Land Trusts Operating in Region 23

Virginia Outdoors Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
The Elizabeth River Project
Hampton Land Conservancy
Williamsburg Land Conservancy
Newport News Green Foundation, Inc
APVA Preservation Virginia
The 500-Year Forest Foundation

Land conservation recommendations include:

- Southern Watershed Area Management Plan Conservation Corridor – A conservation corridor system in the cities of Chesapeake and Virginia Beach was delineated in conjunction with the Southern Watershed Special Area Management Program (SWAMP). The corridor system includes 259 acres in the City of Chesapeake and 400 acres in Virginia Beach for a total of 659 acres. Approximately 272 acres within the corridor system have been protected through a combination of fee simple purchase and conservation easements. Several efforts are underway to protect additional acreage within the corridor system. An Application for Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) funding to purchase a set of parcels in the two cities is currently pending.

Green infrastructure

Information about green infrastructure is found in Chapter IV: Green Infrastructure. Regional recommendations for green infrastructure include:

- Local and regional agencies should become informed and educate constituents about green infrastructure planning, including guidance on local zoning initiatives for changing community design and transportation systems.

- Localities should support implementation of regional green infrastructure planning, which is being coordinated by the Hampton Roads Planning District for a regional conservation corridor system to include open space, conservation land, recreation opportunities and wildlife corridors.

Programs

The following recommendations integrate statewide program initiatives into responsive regional strategies for outdoor recreation and conservation. The statewide program areas addressed in this section include: trails and greenways, blueways and water access, historic and landscape resources, scenic resources, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways, scenic rivers, watersheds, environmental and land stewardship education, and the private sector. Recommendations are bulleted or numbered and are not sequenced by state or local priorities. Numbered recommendations are site specific to the regional map at the end of this section (see Map X-43).

Trails and greenways

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiatives, Greenways and Trails.

Statewide trunkline trails

- 1 Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should implement the **James River Heritage Trail** that is proposed to follow America's Founding River from the Chesapeake Bay to the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. The trail follows the old Kanawha Canal towpath, park trails, scenic riverside roadways and urban riverfront trails deep into the heart of Virginia.
 - 2 Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should implement the **Trans Virginia Southern Trail** that will stretch from the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay through Region 23. This trunkline trail is comprised of many trails existing or underway. This network will connect the mountains to the sea and stimulate ecotourism across Southern Virginia. In Hampton Roads, the corridor could go through the City of Virginia Beach, Chesapeake County, City of Suffolk, Isle of Wight County and Southampton County.
- The portion of the Virginia Beach Pipeline Trail should be constructed using the right-of-way of the Lake Gaston-Virginia Beach water pipeline.

3 The **East Coast Greenway**, proposed to span almost 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida, aims to connect all the major cities of the East Coast along a continuous, off-road path. This trail will make use of waterfront esplanades, canal paths, railroad corridors and park paths for cyclists, hikers, skaters, equestrians and people with disabilities as it connects urban, suburban and rural America. An East Coast Greenway spur is planned eastward to the coastal area of Virginia and into North Carolina. As plans for the corridor proceed, localities and regional representatives should be involved in the decision making process.

- Consideration should be given to co-alignment of the East Coast Greenway spur with the doubling of the Midtown Tunnel between Portsmouth and Norfolk. The East Coast Greenway spur corridor could be located in Isle of Wight County and the cities of Suffolk, Norfolk and Chesapeake.
- The cities of Suffolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake and Norfolk have teamed up to develop an inter-city trail connection in the south side Hampton Roads area. Portions of the Multi-City Bike Trail could link with the Virginia Capital Trail and the East Coast Greenway spur. The Multi-City Bike Trail totals 28 miles in length and will promote regionalism by improving links with Suffolk, the Seaboard Coastal Trail along Route 164, the Naval Base with Downtown Norfolk and eastward to Virginia Beach along the Elizabeth River Trail tying into the light rail corridor alignment.
- The East Coast Greenway will use the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail and Greenway, a 20-mile long trail that parallels the Dismal Swamp Canal and US 17. This portion of the East Coast Greenway spur will span between the City of Portsmouth and Elizabeth City, North Carolina. An 8.5-mile portion of this trail is located in the southwestern section of Chesapeake and was made possible through the relocation of U.S. Route 17 approximately one-half mile to the east. The land use plan for the land between the trail and the new Route 17 designates 75 percent of the land for conservation and recreation. This open space provides a crucial link between the Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge and the Northwest River Conservation Corridor included in the Southern Watershed Area Management Plan. Recommendations for the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail and Greenway include providing additional amenities, such as permanent parking, picnicking, an additional boat ramp, wayside and a separated natural surface trail for horses. Also proposed is a 3-mile extension of the trail to the north tying into the historic Deep Creek community and the northern terminus of the Dismal Swamp Canal,

along with acquisition of conservation land adjacent to the trail for habitat preservation and passive recreation.

- A portion of the East Coast Greenway spur will be co-aligned with the Virginia Capital Trail along Route 5 with the trail crossing the James River near the mouth of the Bay. The Virginia Capital Trail, which has been approved by all of the local jurisdictions, should be constructed in a manner that preserves the historic and scenic beauty of its unique canopied tree corridor. Support from the region's localities, state agencies and nonprofit organizations is needed for continued implementation of the Virginia Capital Trail to Richmond. Opportunities for linking other trail spurs and the Virginia Capital Trail with the East Coast Greenway should be pursued by local and regional agencies and organizations.
- The Peninsula Greenway is proposed in James City County along the existing utility corridor shared by Virginia Dominion Power, Colonial Gas and Newport News Water Works. This trail would traverse the length of the county and serves as the structural spine for greenway development. Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should integrate this trail with the East Coast Greenway and incorporate the Regional Bikeway Plan.

Regional trails

In Region 23, efforts are underway to coordinate local trails and greenways planning and development. A formal program to coordinate plans on the Upper Peninsula has been in effect for some time, and localities are discussing approaches for broader regional coordination through the Hampton Roads Planning District. Locally and regionally initiated trail and greenway planning is important for identifying and providing these desirable resources. Such plans should reflect efforts to link existing and proposed trails and greenways into a regional greenways network connecting existing and proposed recreational, natural, cultural, water, commercial and any additional resources the community deems desirable. New facilities should be developed in coordination with road improvements, land development projects and through individual project initiatives. The implementation of this plan will require the participation of all affected localities.

- The Hampton Roads Center Parkway Greenway is being developed along the new east-west expressway. The greenway will connect Newport News and Hampton to the 8-mile trail system at Sandy Bottom Nature Trail. The City of Hampton should connect this trail system to a series of inter-connected trails

throughout the city, possibly utilizing old railroad and utility line rights-of-way. An abandoned section of railroad should be targeted for connection of Old Town Phoebus with an area along Interstate 64 adjacent to downtown Hampton. This greenway could also include a trail to Fort Monroe, especially if it is developed as a park.

- The Cross County Greenway should be developed and managed as a primary greenway corridor in James City County connecting Jamestown Island with York River State Park. This corridor links the Powhatan Creek Greenway with the York River Greenway at the James City County District Park Sports Complex.
- The Powhatan Creek Greenway should be developed and managed as a natural corridor located in James City County's sensitive environmental area along Powhatan Creek and within the Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Area (RPA).
- The Williamsburg Inner and Outer loops are trails within James City County that should be developed and managed as parallel facilities to existing roadways, including the Route 199 Inner loop corridor and the Outer loop on Centerville Road in Lightfoot south to Route 5 along Greensprings Road.

Water Access

Blueways and water access are critical in a water rich state like Virginia. A discussion of the water access in the Commonwealth can be found in Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Water Access and Blueways. Water access recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should establish cooperative agreements among localities, other agencies and private landowners to meet the increasing need for public access to recreational waters.
- Regional and local agencies should identify strategies to make additional waterfront resources available for public use.
- Regional and local agencies should provide adequate support facilities and services, such as restrooms, concessions, parking and maintenance for existing and proposed public water and beach access areas.
- Regional and local agencies should acquire or maintain access to existing public beaches and water access sites that may be jeopardized by changes in land use or development activities.
- The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and local government should expand public access

to water by developing parking and launch facilities at bridge crossings and old ferry landing sites.

- Identify and increase public access to provide more water access sites within the Chesapeake Bay watershed in Virginia to meet the commitments of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement.
- Identify and increase water access opportunities to Virginia's southern rivers.

4 The **Buckroe Beach Park** plan should maximize the amount of open space for public beach access. The opportunity to plan recreation along publicly owned beaches in the Commonwealth is indeed rare. The 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey (VOS)* shows additional access to the water and beaches are needed to meet recreational demand for present and future generations.

5 **Newmarket Creek**, which runs 12 miles through the City of Hampton, should be developed as a blueway and greenway park. Newmarket Creek will become the core of an extensive blueway system for the city. The first canoe launch has been installed at Air Power Park on Mercury Boulevard. This location will connect the greenway park to the Bass Pro Shop Lake on Power Plant Parkway, which is a distance of approximately five miles. A blueway and greenway guide is being developed for Hampton. Newmarket Creek connects with Back River and, eventually, the Chesapeake Bay. The master plan for the combined greenway-blueway is currently being developed with recommendations including a seven-acre site with interpretive center and launch area as well as other water access amenities.

6 **Elizabeth River Water Trail**, connecting **Paradise Creek** in Portsmouth with other regional wildlife corridors and water trails, should be developed and managed to support Paradise Creek Nature Park as the vital link in these corridors and trails.

7 Implement the development of the **Chickahominy Water Trail** as an addition to the John Smith's Adventures on the James River Water Trail. This water trail would highlight historic events related to the 1607-1609 time period and identify land access points for recreational access to and from the river.

8 The **York River Water Trail** (www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec/images/h2otrail.pdf) includes trailhead locations at New Quarter Park, Back Creek Park, Smith Landing, Riverwalk Landing and Old Wormley Creek Landing. Improvements at each of these sites and enhancements along the water trail should be maintained as a recreational destination.

9 **Isle of Wight blueways** are planned on the Pagan River, Jones Creek and Cypress Creek. Each water body will have historical interpretative signage installed to identify significant historical events associated with the Civil and Revolutionary wars. Kiosks located at key access points along the trail will include interpretive education related to historical events as well as graphic and photographic representations. Continued management, improvement and linkages to water and land-based facilities should be pursued as part of this blueway.

10 The **Chesapeake Intracoastal Waterway** from Great Bridge in Chesapeake through Virginia Beach to North Carolina should be evaluated for extended recreational opportunities on land as well as in the water.

11 **Jamestown Campground and Yacht Basin** is being purchased with support from Virginia Land Conservation Foundation funding. It is a 112-acre waterfront property surrounding the historic and cultural resources at Historic Jamestowne on Jamestown Island and the Jamestown Settlement, and it should be integrated with surrounding recreational, tourist and cultural resources.

12 **West Neck Creek, Pocaty River, Blackwater Creek** (in the City of Virginia Beach), **Muddy Creek** and **Asheville Bridge Creek** should have limited non-motorized boat access. These water bodies are adjacent to sensitive lowlands that have high water tables and erodible shorelines. Increased erosion along these waterways will negatively affect the scenic beauty of these resources and degrade the existing water quality of the streams. Plans to mitigate erosion and improve public access at these sites should be pursued.

13 The Hoffer Creek Wildlife Foundation operates a 142-acre preserve in the Churchland area of Portsmouth. The **Hoffer Creek Preserve** property is managed by the foundation for environmental education, research and recreation, and it provides access for canoes and kayaks along 2.5 miles of the creek. Additional public access, outreach and education should be pursued at this site.

14 **Tyler's Beach** offers water access to the James River in Isle of Wight County at Tyler's Beach Boat Ramp, located on Tyler's Beach Road in Smithfield. Tyler's Beach Boat Ramp is a 13-acre facility that includes a public beach, fishing, boat ramp and harbor. This facility needs bulkhead replacement, beach development and construction of a restroom facility.

15 Regional and local organizations should continue to support the **Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Water Trail** in Virginia and conduct a comprehensive access study to determine potential locations for visitor services along the trail. In addition, state, regional and county agencies should continue to develop water trail segments of the **Captain John Smith Adventures on the James and Captain John Smith Adventures on the Mattaponi, Pamunkey and York** to promote stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay as well as additional public access and recreational opportunities.

Historic and landscape resources

Consideration should be given to evaluating potential historic and landscape recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Historic and Landscape Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should identify historic and archaeological resources that can be used for tourism, recreation and education. These resources should be included in local land use planning and decision-making processes to promote preservation and protection.
- Regional and local agencies should build relationships with local historic attractions, historical societies, museums and other tourism organizations in the region to include the Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Civil War Trails, APVA Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Main Street Program and others to enhance local heritage tourism, educational and recreational offerings.
- Regional and local agencies should encourage local governments and private organizations that own historic properties in the region to manage properties effectively for long-term protection and to maximize public benefit consistent with the nature of the historic property.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize the multiple historic and cultural resources within the rural landscape through rural historic districts.
- Regional and local agencies should support the creation of other heritage area programs to promote tourism and preservation in distinctive regions.
- Local government and local and regional organizations should work with the state to meet the critical need for a citywide survey of the historic and architectural resources of Newport News.

- Local government and local and regional organizations should work with the state to meet the critical need for an archaeological survey in the City of Norfolk, as well as for an assessment of the city's archaeological resources.
- A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Washington-Rochambeau Route as a National Historic Trail was introduced in both houses of Congress in July 2006 and is currently in committee. This 600-mile route was followed by the American and French armies in 1781 and 1782 under George Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau as they traveled to and returned from the siege and victory at Yorktown. The route, which passes through Hampton Roads, has also been designated as a special highway by the state.

16 Research the feasibility of the **Deep Creek Canal and Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal** as a designated historic transportation route.

Scenic resources

Consideration should be given to potential scenic recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should develop corridor management plans for scenic byways, blueways, greenways and scenic rivers to assure preservation of the scenic quality of the corridor.
- Regional and local agencies should protect the scenic value of lands adjacent to publicly owned properties, as well as the scenic value of working agricultural and forestal areas key to maintaining a sense of place and economic vitality of the region. Scenic attributes to be considered include:
 - Consider timber-harvesting impacts on key viewsheds.
 - Protect viewsheds along river corridors and scenic byways.
 - Create scenic overlooks and vista cuts along Virginia byways and scenic highways to enhance the visual experience of traveling.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should assess scenic assets for this region to determine appropriate protection strategies.
- Route 5 and the Virginia Capital Trail are significant scenic corridors incorporating expanded historic tourism and recreation opportunities. Scenic corridor

management strategies should be evaluated and implemented in local comprehensive plans.

- Captain John Smith Adventures on the James Driving Trail includes many scenic vistas and corridors. Scenic corridor management strategies should be evaluated and implemented in local comprehensive plans.

Scenic highways and Virginia byways

Opportunities to traverse Virginia's scenic and cultural landscapes are enhanced through nationally recognized designation. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways.

Scenic roads recommendations for the region include:

- Regional and local agencies should recognize and nominate scenic roads for designation as Virginia byways.
- Regional and local agencies should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to develop corridor management plans to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should incorporate Virginia byways and scenic highways into local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure viewsheds are conserved and the sense of place retained along these corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should support designation of nationally qualified historic corridors to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.
- National Scenic Byway status has been conferred upon the Colonial Parkway, but it has also been awarded the even higher designation of All-American Road, which means that the parkway is of national significance and a destination in itself. The Colonial Parkway is an integral part of the Colonial National Historical Park, and it is a journey through 174 years of the English Colonial history of America. The 23-mile road begins at Jamestown, which was the first permanent English settlement in America, passes through Williamsburg, and ends at Yorktown, the site of the final major battle of the Revolutionary War. Along the entire route, spectacular views of the James and York rivers abound, and turnouts and parking areas are provided along the way for quick glimpses or contemplation.
- Protection of the scenic viewsheds of the Colonial Parkway and the natural, historical and cultural

resources of the Colonial National Historical Park is critical to the continued beauty and uniqueness of this corridor and its environs.

- Development of a Virginia Karst Trail is recommended to help educate the public about karst resources. This thematic trail will promote resource management goals and best management practices that help landowners protect sensitive karst resources, such as caves, springs and sinkholes. The trail will focus on above-ground features and tourist caves throughout the state and Grafton karst, the Chuckatuck karst, and the Yorktown geologic formation on the Peninsula in Region 23. The Virginia Karst Trail, endorsed by the Virginia Region of National Speleological Society, will benefit through increased educational, commercial and tourism activities.

Scenic roads recommendations for the region include:

- 17 Local, regional and state agencies should explore the concept of a scenic state connector road and greenbelt between **Green Spring** and the **Colonial Parkway**. Greenspring Road should be evaluated for its potential as part of the Virginia Byways Program as this portion of the road is concurrent with the Virginia Capital Trail.

The following road segments are potential Virginia Byways and should be evaluated to see if they qualify for designation:

- 18 The **Green Sea Byway** is proposed to connect the Back Bay Wildlife Refuge to the Great Dismal Swamp by using secondary roads in the cities of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake. A segment of the Green Sea Byway has been designated in Virginia Beach. Other portions connecting to the Great Dismal Swamp are pending evaluation by local, regional and state agencies and organizations.
- 19 State **Route 35** in Southampton County.
- 20 **U.S. Route 13** to the Eastern Shore.
- 21 **U.S. Route 17** in Isle of Wight County.

Scenic rivers

For detailed information about the Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program and its purpose, benefits and designation process, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiative, Scenic Rivers.

In Region 23, the following are designated scenic rivers:

- the North Landing River and tributaries from the North Carolina state line to its headwaters, including segments of Pocatay Creek, Blackwater Creek and West Neck Creek. This river system flows adjacent to the North Landing River Natural Area Preserve, which encompasses approximately 1,900 acres. The Nature Conservancy owns an additional 6,000 acres within the river system.
- Nottoway River from the bridge at Route 40 at Stony Creek to Route 653 (Carey's Bridge) in Southampton County.
- The Lower James River is designated a state historic river for 1.2 miles from Trees Point in Charles City County to Lawnes Creek at the Isle of Wight and Surry County lines.

The following river segments are potential Virginia scenic rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

- 22 The **Nottoway River** from Carey's Bridge at Route 653 to the North Carolina state line.
- 23 The **Blackwater River** in Isle of Wight and Southampton counties from the City of Franklin to the Surry County line.
- 24 The **Chickahominy River** in James City County from Providence Forge to the James River. 25.
- 25 The **Northwest River** in Chesapeake, from its headwaters to the North Carolina state line. This river could be added to the present designation for the North Landing River and its tributaries.
- 26 The **James River** from the Charles City-James City County line to Hampton Roads. Part of this reach has been designated by the General Assembly as a Historic River.
- 27 **Alton's Creek** and **Milldam Creek**, both tributaries to the North Landing River in Virginia Beach.

Watershed resources

Hampton Roads is in the James River and Chowan River watersheds. A portion of the area is in the Chesapeake Bayside watershed with water flowing directly into the Bay. For information about Virginia's watershed programs, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Virginia's Watershed Programs. Watershed recommendations for this region include:

Watershed groups in Region 23

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Back Bay Restoration Foundation
- Blackwater/Nottoway Riverkeeper Program
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Elizabeth River Project
- Friends of Powhatan Creek
- Friends of the Rivers of Virginia
- James River Association
- Lynnhaven River 2007

Watershed recommendations for this region include:

- Implementation of forestland conservation will demonstrate Virginia's commitment to a 2001 Memorandum of Agreement between Virginia and North Carolina to work together to restore and maintain the biological integrity of the Albemarle-Pamlico sounds estuarine system. Land conservation will also support goals of the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuarine Program (APNEP), established in 1987 by the EPA to conserve the estuary's natural resources.
- Regional and local agencies should make long-term water supply protection planning in the Nottoway and Blackwater watershed a high priority for the south Hampton Roads district. The Nottoway and Blackwater rivers are part of the drinking water supply for more than 700,000 residents in the south Hampton Roads metropolitan region. State agencies, planning districts and other stakeholders in the Blackwater-Nottoway watersheds are strongly encouraged to develop and implement watershed-wide water supply protection plans. Anticipated changes in land use due to economic growth in Region 23 may adversely impact water quality and quantity on both rivers if watershed protection is not addressed.
- Flood abatement strategies for the Blackwater River should favor protection of existing forested wetlands in the watershed. State agencies and private organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, are encouraged to acquire and manage bottomland hardwood tracts along the river. Six of the 10 worst floods on record for the river have occurred in the past eight years. Intensive timber harvesting in wetland areas is thought to be a key contributing factor to the flooding. Maintaining forest cover is recognized as a cost-effective strategy for reducing the frequency of catastrophic flooding. State, federal and local stakeholders as well as private organizations are encouraged to pursue coordinated flood

reduction strategies to help protect the economic stability of the City of Franklin, situated along the Blackwater.

Environmental and land stewardship education

For detailed information on Environmental and Land Stewardship education, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Environmental and Land Stewardship Education. Environmental and land stewardship recommendations for this region include:

- Regional and local environmental education providers should continue cooperation at outdoor facilities, especially with the Chesapeake Bay Education Center located at First Landing State Park.

Federal programs

For information on federal programs affecting Virginia's outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities, see Chapter IX-A: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency.

28 **Fort Monroe** is adjacent to the City of Hampton at the confluence of the James River at Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake Bay. In the past, public access was restricted due to the property's military mission. Fort Monroe is included in the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list. Strong consideration for the property's cultural and scenic qualities and opportunities for regional and statewide recreational benefits should be prioritized in redevelopment and conservation plans for the property. Pursuant to state legislation enacted in 2007, the National Park Service has been requested to perform a reconnaissance study to help evaluate whether Fort Monroe should become affiliated with the National Park System to help manage and preserve the historic and natural resources at Old Point Comfort. In addition, **Fort Norfolk**, **Fort Custis** and **Fort Wool** complement the historic and recreational components and should be included in plans for recreation at Fort Monroe. Fort Norfolk should be evaluated for the potential to provide a pedestrian trail adjacent to the water in an urban environment. Management of all of these facilities should maximize conservation and public accessibility. Public access to the water should be a particularly high priority.

29 The possibility of using the **Fort Story** beach for providing additional public access may be a future consideration. Other U.S. military installations in the region should also be evaluated for their potential to be used for joint recreational activities, particularly beach and water access.

30 **Cheatham Annex**, located adjacent to New Quarter Park in York County, should be considered for recreational opportunities and water access.

National parks

- Continue collaborative efforts through the **Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Program** and **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail** (PHNST) to connect people to heritage, outdoor recreation, and educational opportunities and resources.

Chesapeake Bay Gateways

The National Park Service coordinates the Chesapeake Bay Gateway Program (www.baygateways.net) to promote a historic and environmental focus on water access. Designated Chesapeake Bay Gateway sites in the Hampton Roads Planning District include:

The Waterman's Museum
 Yorktown Visitor Center and Battlefield
 York River State Park
 Chickahominy Riverfront Park
 Powhatan Creek Blueway
 Jamestown Island
 Mariner's Museum
 Virginia Living Museum
 Norfolk Waterway Trail System
 Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve
 Elizabeth River Trail – Atlantic Coastal Spur
 Nauticus National Maritime Center
 Eastern Branch Elizabeth River
 Chesapeake Bay Center at First Landing State Park
 Great Bridge Lock Park
 Lower James River Water Trail
 Powhatan Creek Blueway

31 The National Park Service (NPS) supports the establishment of bikeways and walking and jogging trails in the **Colonial National Historical Park and Jamestown Island** along the **Colonial Parkway** corridor, now designated an All American Road and National Scenic Byway. Pavement improvements for bicyclists and signage for pedestrians and bicyclists would improve safety. NPS plans to explore the feasibility of building a trail for walkers, joggers and bicyclists as part of Yorktown Battlefield. The feasibility of building a trail linking the west tour road to Surrender Field to prevent conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists will be studied. Due to increased development in the area, NPS is interested

in working to protect the vistas adjacent to and throughout the park. NPS also plans to study the effects of heavy visitation on several sites along the Colonial Parkway. It will assess opportunities to improve facilities, e.g., hardening trails and adding comfort stations and overflow parking. NPS recommends the **Cheatham Pond** tract be divided into parcels with long-term leases or management agreements with both the U.S. Navy and York County. A portion of the parcel tentatively proposed for development and management by York County has excellent potential for a public boating access site, along with passive recreational facilities such as hiking, biking and equestrian trails and picnic areas.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

32 Continue maintenance of the agreement allowing access through **Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)** to **False Cape State Park**. In 1989, USFWS received approval to expand the **Back Bay NWR** to the north and west of Sandbridge and along the western shore of Back Bay. When complete, the 6,340-acre expansion will provide additional protection for the marshes and fastlands surrounding Back Bay and help to initiate the recovery of this important resource. The westward expansion of Back Bay NWR should include provisions for canoeing, kayaking and bank fishing. This may be accomplished by renovating former boat ramps and through partnerships with the Commonwealth and the City of Virginia Beach. High priority should be given to the relocation of the visitor center to the western side of Back Bay to improve to the refuge's accessibility for environmental education.

33 The **Great Dismal Swamp NWR** consists of about 109,000 acres in Virginia and North Carolina and is managed by USFWS. Approximately 84,000 acres are located in the cities of Suffolk and Chesapeake. Measures to protect the refuge and provide appropriate access to the area immediately surrounding the refuge are being addressed. A comprehensive conservation plan for the Great Dismal Swamp NWR is being completed. In the 2000 Appropriation Act, the Virginia General Assembly directed that, "The Virginia Tourism Corporation, with the assistance of the City of Suffolk, shall develop a Public Use Development Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge." Recommendations from the report, *Opportunities for Regional Tourism Development*, should be considered with regard to the Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge.

34 **Plum Tree Island NWR** in Poquoson is an extensive marsh system of more than 3,275 acres. The island was an old Air Force bombing range, which,

because of potential hazards, is not available for public use. However, an expansion has been approved. By acquiring marsh systems to the west of Plum Tree Island, it will be possible to provide additional protection for critical habitat, and to provide opportunities for controlled public hunting and wildlife observation. Opportunities for partnership between the USFWS and others to provide compatible recreational and environmental education for Virginia's citizens should continue. The proposed expansion of **Plum Tree Island** should be evaluated to possibly include public access to Back River and Lloyd Bay for fishing and wildlife observation.

35 **Nansemond NWR** is located on the Nansemond River in Suffolk. It is a satellite refuge managed by Great Dismal Swamp NWR. Nansemond NWR became part of the USFWS National Wildlife Refuge System in 1973 when the U.S. Navy transferred 207 acres of salt marsh to the service. In 1999, an additional 204 acres of upland grassland and forested stream corridors were transferred from the U.S. Navy. It is not open to the public. This facility should be evaluated for its potential to provide outreach, education and public access.

State facilities and programs

For a discussion of state facilities and programs throughout the entire Commonwealth, see Chapter IX-B: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency or program.

State parks

36 Due to the extremely high demand for public access to the waters of the Commonwealth, any large acreage waterfront property that becomes available on the major tidal rivers or their tributaries in the region should be evaluated for potential acquisition and development as a regional or state park. In Region 23, potential acquisitions should be explored in the western part of the region along the **Nottoway River in Southampton County**.

37 **False Cape State Park** (4,321 acres) is in Virginia Beach, between Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the North Carolina state line. The park is a mile wide barrier spit between Back Bay and the Atlantic Ocean with close to six miles of beach. No vehicular access is permitted. Access is by hiking, biking or tram, or coordinated as part of a scheduled education program. Parking is available at Little Island Recreation Area or the refuge. The park offers primitive camping, hiking, biking, fishing, canoeing, kayaking and boat-

ing. There is also an overnight environmental education center. In addition to environmental education, other programs include astronomy, night hikes, bird hikes, canoe trips and seining programs. Special programs are offered in conjunction with the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The trails within the park allow visitors to observe beaches, dunes, maritime forests, wooded swamps, marshes and the Bay all within one park visit.

In 2002, a significant portion of the park (3,573 acres) was dedicated as a state natural area preserve. Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFWS addressing access across the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, the refuge cooperatively manages the impoundments at False Cape. Through the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB) referendum, the park will be getting a new office-visitor center complex.

38 First Landing State Park (2,889 acres), is in Virginia Beach on the Chesapeake Bay. The park, one of the six original Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) state parks opened in June of 1936, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The park's name was changed in 1997 from Seashore State Park to First Landing State Park to reflect its heritage as the first place where members of the Virginia Company landed. It is also listed as a National Natural Landmark for its significant natural features, rare species and communities. The park offers boating, swimming, nature and history programs, hiking, biking, picnicking, a boat launch, cabins, a full service campground with water and electric hookups, and 19 miles of trails. The Chesapeake Bay Center, which serves as the park office, visitor and environmental education center, features programs developed in cooperation with the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center. Boardwalks connect the campground and Chesapeake Bay Center with the beach while protecting the sensitive dune areas.

Through the 2002 GOB referendum, the park has upgraded the campground with water and electric hookups, replaced campground bathhouses, constructed new storage facilities in the maintenance area, and made improvements to the Trail Center and Chesapeake Bay Center.

39 York River State Park (2,550 acres) is in James City County. The park has 3.5 miles of shoreline on the York River. Included within the park is the Taskinas Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve, which is managed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science-Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research

Reserve program. The designated area of Taskinas Creek is managed for research and educational purposes that supports research and monitoring in a unique watershed containing upland forest, freshwater habitats, estuarine habitats and meso-haline tidal habitats. The park was once the historic 18th Century Taskinas Plantation, which qualifies the park to become a National Historic Landmark. The park also contains significant Native American archaeological sites, one of which, the Croaker Landing Site, is on the National Register of Historic Places. There are also two known 10,000-year-old Paleo-Indian activity areas within the park's boundaries that are also eligible for National Register listing.

The park offers day-use activities such as picnicking, fishing, and nature and environmental education programming. Canoeing and kayaking are available on Taskinas Creek. The Croaker Landing boat launch provides boater access to the York River. There is also a fishing pier constructed at Croaker Landing supported in part by Smurfit Stone, a local industry. The 2002 GOB provided funds toward the fishing pier and for improvements to the boat launch.

State fish and wildlife management areas (WMA)

Wildlife Management Areas in Hampton Roads include the Ragged Island WMA, Princess Anne WMA and Cavalier WMA. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) should continue to investigate opportunities to acquire in-holdings in their WMAs and to improve each area with trails and other structures for wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation. They should also acquire additional lands wherever feasible to provide additional access for public hunting, fishing and other wildlife viewing recreation.

40 Four tracts, totaling 1,546 acres, make up the **Princess Anne WMA** located on Back Bay in Hampton Roads. This serves as DGIF's major waterfowl hunting area. Hunting opportunity is further enhanced by a long-standing cooperative agreement with Virginia State Parks allowing hunting on some park acreage. Over the years, changes in salinity and the decline in aquatic vegetation has altered the fishery in Back Bay proper. There is also a boat ramp and parking at the Princess Anne headquarters. Continued public access improvements for wildlife habitat and fisheries should be sought to sustain the WMA resources.

41 The **Cavalier WMA** is comprised of two parcels, the 750-acre Dismal Swamp tract adjoining the Dismal Swamp Canal and the 3,800-acre Cavalier tract that abuts the North Carolina state line near Route 17 in

the City of Chesapeake. Cavalier WMA provides coastal and forested habitats for a wide range of wildlife, including black bear, neo-tropical migratory songbirds, canebrake rattlesnakes, white-tailed deer and eastern wild turkeys. The 3,800-acre main tract, located approximately 2.5 miles east of the Great Dismal Swamp NWR, was once part of the Great Dismal Swamp but was ditched and drained more than 200 years ago. The Dismal Swamp tract lies approximately six miles to the north and west of the main Cavalier tract. Deer and bear hunting is conducted through the department's quota hunt system at this WMA. Access and management for game should be continued and expanded where feasible.

42 The **Ragged Island WMA** consists of 1,537 acres of brackish marsh and small pine islands along the south side of the lower James River in Hampton Roads. There is the opportunity to hunt deer in the pine islands and other high ground. The James offers saltwater fishing, and freshwater fishing is available on the creeks. The area has interpretive signs and trails, and it has been designated a Watchable Wildlife Area. The boardwalk gives bird-watchers, hikers and photographers some unique opportunities. A public fishing pier is located at the north end of the James River Bridge. There are two parking lots, both entered from U.S. Highway 17. A boardwalk, viewing platform and trail, financed through the Non-game Wildlife and Endangered Species Program, allows easy walking access for viewing the marsh. Continued management for public access and sustained wildlife and fisheries habitat is recommended.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)

- VMRC should continue promotion of saltwater recreational fishing opportunities in the Commonwealth through continued construction of new reef sites and augmentation of existing artificial fishing reef sites.
- VMRC should increase opportunities for public access.

State forests

- Local and regional agencies should encourage the use of Department of Forestry (DOF) Best Management Practices in floodplain forest areas, particularly those adjacent to state-designated scenic waterways.
- Local and regional agencies should use any future DOF properties as field classrooms to help with educational programs.

- Local and regional agencies should coordinate with DOF and seek the assistance of local trail and river user organizations to develop forest trails and publish maps for each state acquired forest, as well as establish greenways and blueways for public use.
- Local and regional agencies should investigate opportunities to acquire fee simple ownership or easements to conserve working farms and forests in the region.
- Local and regional agencies should work with DOF to create defensible space around buildings to reduce the risk of wild fires through the DOF Fire Wise Program.
- Localities should work with DOF on education and monitoring of tree diseases and other pests that could weaken the forested environments.
- Local, state and regional agencies and organizations should target agricultural lands for reforestation to protect the water quality of the area and limit the effects of erosion on these lands.
- In 2006, International Paper sold company-owned forest located in the Nottoway, Blackwater and Meherrin River watersheds to The Nature Conservancy (TNC). DOF is interested in acquiring the land for a state forest.
- Establish a state forest in Sussex and Southampton Counties with opportunities for public access to outdoor recreation. TNC has secured large tracts from International Paper in the vicinity of the Piney Grove Natural Preserve. DOF should acquire this property as a state forest.

State natural area preserves

The Hampton Roads region is in the Atlantic Flyway, enhancing opportunities to observe waterfowl throughout the region during certain periods of the year. In general, the region boasts abundant natural resources. Lands protected by federal, state and local ownership, dedication or easements allow for biodiversity and provide opportunities for the enjoyment of nature. Properties boasting this richness could be incorporated into ecotourism initiatives, which could further promote their special character while providing a profitable tourist alternative to the region.

North Carolina has a wildlife management area designated on the Northwest River adjacent to the City of Chesapeake. This landholding by North Carolina strengthens the management of the river corridor as a biologically diverse area, and it is accessible from Virginia by boat. There are also extensive state wildlife

management areas on the western shore of Back Bay, including the Princess Anne Wildlife Management Area and the Whitehurst Tract. Because ecotourism is expected to be more popular in the future, it is essential that important lands within Hampton Roads be identified and conservation mechanisms established to ensure the longevity of this biodiversity.

The following natural area preserves are located within the district: Antioch Pines and Blackwater Ecological Preserve in Isle of Wight County; Grafton Ponds in the City of Newport News; North Landing River and False Cape State Park in the city of Virginia Beach; and Northwest River in the City of Chesapeake.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has, as of November 2006, documented 1,116 occurrences of 295 rare species and natural communities in the Hampton Roads Planning District. Fifty-three species are globally rare and eight are federally threatened or endangered. Two hundred twenty-one conservation sites have been identified in the district; 99 sites (45 percent) have received some level of protection through ownership or management by state, federal and non-government organizations. However, only six sites are protected well enough to ensure the long-term viability of the rare species and natural communities they support.

DCR recommends that all unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, be targeted for future land conservation efforts. The appropriate method 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.

Within Region 23, DCR is particularly interested in protecting:

- Pine barren communities.
- Seasonal depression ponds and other significant wetlands.
- Large blocks of old-growth cypress-tupelo swamps.
- Additional habitat for rare reptiles and amphibians.
- Additional lands along the Northwest and North Landing Rivers.

Other state lands

For a discussion of other state lands, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies.

The following state-owned lands contain significant undeveloped open space that may have some potential for local recreational use. Each site should be assessed and, where appropriate, a cooperative agreement should be developed to make these resources available for local use as parks and open space.

- The College of William and Mary, Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, Christopher Newport University, Tidewater Community College, Paul D. Camp Community College and Thomas Nelson Community College should evaluate opportunities to provide outdoor education opportunities and recreation in the region.

Transportation programs

- Local and regional agencies should develop alternatives to the use of private automobiles for daily activities. Transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, improved community design, as well as a change in people's attitudes toward transportation alternatives will be needed for the transportation system of the future to meet capacity needs and energy constraints.
- Local and regional agencies should work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to implement Context Sensitive Solutions that accommodate multiple transportation modes.
- Local and regional agencies should recognize the need for a network of low-speed, low-volume roadways used by equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, and they should include protections for this network in their comprehensive plan.
- Local and regional agencies should encourage the development of a permanent process for integrating the recommendations of local public health agencies, and they should include "active living" opportunities into all phases of transportation planning, land use planning and project design.
- Localities should implement bicycle, pedestrian and greenways items in local plans, i.e., *Forward Chesapeake 2026 Comprehensive Plan*, City of Franklin *2003 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*, City of Newport News *2001 Framework for the Future Bikeways Plan*, City of Norfolk *1992 Living Community Bicycle Plan*, City of Virginia Beach *2004 Bikeways and Trails Plan for the City of*

Virginia Beach, Isle of Wight 2006 Proposed Improvements for Bicycles/Pedestrians, 2002 James City County Greenway Master Plan; the City of Williamsburg 1989 Comprehensive Sidewalk Plan, York County 2005 Comprehensive Plan: Charting the Course to 2025, and 1998 The Williamsburg, James City and York County Regional Bicycle Facilities Plan.

- Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should implement alternate transportation and separate bicycle facilities in the right-of-way of the proposed Southeastern Parkway.
- Local, regional and state agencies and organizations should implement the 2030 Transportation Plan (under development) that will address multimodal transportation options for the region.

Local and regional parks and recreation departments

The Hampton Roads Planning District area has many large parks that serve the entire region. These parks include lands surrounding water supply reservoirs, as well as properties acquired by localities to provide local recreational opportunities or to protect biologically diverse areas. Each property should be evaluated and management plans adopted to ensure the appropriate balance of recreational and conservation initiatives. Regional open space plans, to include recreational and conservation opportunities, are important in compiling information from various existing plans available from localities and other regional studies. The Hampton Roads Conservation Corridor Study addresses open space and links recreational opportunities to the regional networks through regional corridor connections.

For a discussion of local and regional parks and recreation departments, see Chapter IX-D: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Local agencies and organizations should explore reclamation of abandoned landfills into new and needed parks.
- Local governments and agencies should consider cooperative management for the recreational use of private, corporate and state or federally owned lands in order to increase local access and meet outdoor recreation needs.
- The City of Virginia Beach should implement the *Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan* 2000 update as a guidance document for open space and recreational

planning as well as integrate the plan as part of the next revision to the city's comprehensive plan. The plan encompasses greenways, beaches and scenic waterways, cultural and natural areas, parks and athletic facilities, trails, and open space preservation.

- The City of Chesapeake should implement *A Window Into The Year 2010 ... A Plan For Parks & Recreation*.
- James City County should implement its parks and recreation master plan. The recommendations in the plan are estimated to cost \$150 million for land acquisition to add 68 multi-use athletic fields, 75 miles of new multi-use trails, 37 miles of greenways, 13 new boating and canoeing waterway access sites, and to purchase and preserve more than 4,100 acres of undeveloped property. The preservation efforts would be in addition to the 2,650 acres that are already owned by the city for recreational use and preservation as open space.
- The City of Chesapeake should implement the Open Space Master Plan completed in November 2000. The plan connects the cultural, historic, natural and scenic resources of the city by a non-motorized trail.
- The City of Franklin should implement the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan completed in March 2003. This plan calls for trails, picnic areas, nature programs, camping sites and access to the Blackwater River. The plan also recommends programs to incorporate greenways and conservation of open space into existing and new development.
- 43 The City of Chesapeake should expand recreational opportunities while maintaining resource integrity to meet growing population demands at the 763-acre **Northwest River Park**. This park is an incredible natural area with opportunities and programs for environmental education, fishing, birding, camping, picnicking, canoeing, boating and hiking.
- 44 The City of Newport News should expand opportunities to connect other parks and natural areas by trails and greenways to **Newport News Park**. These resources should be evaluated for hiking and bird-watching opportunities. This park is an 8,065-acre site straddling the City of Newport News-York County line. This municipal park, one of the largest in the United States, provides a vast array of outdoor recreational opportunities including camping, fishing, hiking, picnicking, golfing and boating. This site also contains significant Civil War era earthworks, as well as the majority of the Grafton Ephemeral Ponds Natural Complex, which provides a wealth of potential interpretive opportunities.

45 The City of Hampton should continue to manage and monitor public access opportunities at **Grandview Nature Preserve**. This park is a critical marsh and beach habitat located on the Chesapeake Bay, and it is currently being recommended for natural area dedication. Combined with the adjoining Grundland Creek Park, the sites total approximately 600 acres. The beach is home to the northeastern beach tiger beetle, which is a federally threatened species and proposed for state listing as endangered. The least tern, a species of concern, has the largest nesting colony on the east coast at this site. The colony is also one of the oldest documented in the country. Because of its sensitive nature, only passive recreational activities, such as hiking and bird watching, are available.

46 The City of Suffolk should continue to expand public access opportunities for fishing at **Lone Star Lakes**. These lakes provide more than 1,100 acres of land and freshwater with potential for additional developments. This lake system is connected to salt water via Chuckatuck Creek.

47 York County should create trail linkages at **Waller Mill Park** and provide signage and mapping to broaden connections with nearby recreational opportunities. This park is owned and operated by the City of Williamsburg and provides a major freshwater-oriented park with opportunities to connect with a network of local bike trails.

48 James City County should implement the **Chickahominy Riverfront Park** master plan and continue to promote the park as a Chesapeake Bay Gateway. The park, 140 acres located on the Chickahominy River and bordered by Gordons Creek, offers camping, boating, a swimming pool and fishing. The park is also a trailhead for the Virginia Capital Trail and is along the John Smith Trail. Facilities include two outdoor swimming pools, boat ramp, fishing pier, campsites, a small driving range, a pavilion and a small store.

49 James City County should continue to offer and expand fishing, boating, picnicking and playground opportunities at **Little Creek Reservoir Park**. This is a scenic park overlooking a 996-acre reservoir, which is a water supply for Newport News.

50 Regional and local agencies and organizations should incorporate **New Quarter Park**, a 550-acre site on Queen Creek in York County, into plans for a regional greenway system. The park is currently used for group activities and includes active recreational

facilities, picnic facilities and canoe access to Queen Creek.

51 Freshwater fishing should be expanded at **Lake Prince, Lake Cahoon, Lake Mead, Lake Kilby, Lake Burnt Mills, Spaetes Run Lake and Western Branch Reservoir**. These lakes are all water supply reservoirs located on impounded tributaries of the Nansemond River within Suffolk. Lake Prince and the Western Branch Reservoir connect to the Nansemond River. Although little upland is owned by the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, it is possible that additional compatible recreational resources, such as hiking trails, picnicking and environmental education, could be developed through cooperative agreements. **Lake Smith** and **Lake Whitehurst**, serving as municipal water supply for the City of Norfolk, and **Lake Airfield** in Sussex County could also provide recreational opportunities in the region.

52 Regional and local agencies and organizations should work together to connect Paradise Creek in Portsmouth with other regional wildlife corridors and water trails and support **Paradise Creek Nature Park** as the vital link in these corridors and trails.

Paradise Creek Nature Park

Paradise Creek Nature Park will be a 40-acre park maintained by the City of Portsmouth. The Elizabeth River Project and the Virginia Port Authority are partnering to acquire the land and design and construct the park prior to turning it over to the city. The park will feature 10 acres of restored wetlands, boardwalks that go up into the tree canopy, a canoe-kayak launch, walking trails, a tidal garden, a pedestrian bridge, educational spaces and a terraced "earth works" sculpture that will give a view of the creek and the nearby Elizabeth River from 50 feet in the air. The park is the cornerstone project of the efforts to restore the 1.5 mile-long Paradise Creek, and it will provide the first public access along the creek. A water trail is being planned, and there will be a wildlife corridor with almost 100 acres of habitat conserved in the 2.9-square-mile watershed. More information is available at www.elizabethriver.org/FrontPgStories/Park.htm.

53 The City of Hampton should continue and expand outdoor environmental education opportunities at **Sandy Bottom Nature Park** and partnerships with other regional outdoor education providers.

Sandy Bottom Nature Park

Sandy Bottom Nature Park, in the City of Hampton, is a 456-acre environmental education facility situated in an area dominated by pine hardwood mixed forest and non-tidal wetlands. The park is home to the state endangered cane-brake rattlesnake and Mabee's salamander. A 52-acre borrow mining pit site has been converted to wetlands, complete with a perimeter trail, boardwalk, observation tower and canoe trails. There is a 10,000 square foot nature center and a wildlife exhibit area. The park provides year-round interpretive programming for school groups and the general public. Recreational activities include hiking, biking, camping, picnicking, canoeing and fishing. Conference and classroom facilities are available. More information is available at www.hampton.va.us/sandybottom.

- 54 Local government and stakeholders should acquire a parcel of property on the tip of the Harris Creek peninsula as an open space and natural area in the **Harris Creek Area**. This area is in Hampton and borders on the Back River, which feeds into the Chesapeake Bay. The 155-acre property features forested wetlands, marsh and forested uplands and is becoming threatened by development. Wetland restoration with an educational component may be a part of the future of this site. Public access at this site should be limited to passive recreational activities.
- 55 Isle of Wight County should implement its capital improvement plan, including upgrading or construction of the following facilities at **Carrollton Nike Park**: relocation of the Soccer Field Complex, a lighted soft-ball field, an additional restroom facility, a new community center, picnic shelters, trails, basketball court, aquatic facility, concessions stand and tennis courts. The Carrollton Nike Park is a 156-acre park in the northern end of Isle of Wight County. Currently, 42 open acres and seven wooded acres have been developed for park buildings, recreation courts and fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, skateboard park and multi-use trails. The remainder of the park is cultivated or remains natural woodlands and marsh along Jones Creek offering wildlife viewing and birding. A master plan for the park calls for approximately 90 acres of the park to be developed.
- 56 Stakeholders should maintain **Fort Boykin Historical Park**, a 14-acre facility dating back to 1623, as part of the Captain John Smith Adventures

on the James Water Trail and Driving Tour. The park includes a picnic shelter and picnic area, an informational kiosk, public restrooms, public beach, several gardens and a self-guided walking tour highlighting significant historical and natural features. Improvements needed at this park involve repairs to the erosion control embankment.

- 57 Isle of Wight County should implement the master plan for the **Heritage Park and Joel C. Bradshaw Fairgrounds**, a 262-acre site with 35 fenced acres, which is designated as fairgrounds, open and wooded space. Fair buildings consist of a headquarters log cabin, three storage sheds and three admissions buildings. The remaining acreage is currently undeveloped. There are plans to develop an engineering and infrastructure design plan that will include a restroom facility, trail system, picnic areas, a playground complex and a soccer complex.
- 58 Isle of Wight County should implement the master plan for **Hardy District Park**, a 50-acre site with 20 acres planned for development.
- 59 Stakeholders should implement plans for **Fort Huger**, including an historic interpretative facility and continuation of the boardwalk and interpretive signage for the site. This site is a 22-acre historic facility, once a military installation during the Civil War, and the park is located on the Captain John Smith Adventures on the James Water Trail and Driving Tour.
- 60 Isle of Wight County and stakeholders should reconstruct and upgrade various historical structures at **Freedom Park** according to the master plan. Freedom Park is home of the first freed black settlement in Virginia. It offers both hiking and biking trails along with a reconstructed historical site. The park consists of 689 acres in James City County, including an entrance road, open meadow, parking, mountain bike and hiking trails, an 18th century graveyard and the Williamsburg Botanical "Ellipse Garden." Freedom Park has a rich historical background dating back to the 1650s.
- 61 Stakeholders should connect **Powhatan Creek Park** to other parks and the Captain John Smith Adventures on the James Water Trail. This park is a 1.2-acre facility on the tidal James River with a boat launch, 20 parking spaces and four fishing-observation piers.
- 62 The City of Virginia Beach should implement improvements according to the master plan for **Stumpy Lake**. This park is a 1,400-acre parcel that

serves as a water supply. The property has surrounding wetlands and wooded areas in addition to a golf course.

Hostels

The Hampton Roads Region should be considered as a location for a gateway hostel convenient to mass transit and amenities of the urban core. Plans for Fort Monroe could include options for a regional hostel facility to be incorporated into public access and recreational opportunities.

Private sector

Much of the demand for outdoor recreation is met by the private sector. For a discussion of the private sector role, see Chapter IX-E: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- All private sector recommendations for meeting the outdoor recreation and conservation needs in the region should be consistent with local land use plans and environmental constraints.
- The private sector could enhance outdoor recreational opportunities by providing tennis courts, swimming pools and golf courses. Often these types of amenities are provided in new housing developments.
- The Hampton Roads Planning District has an abundance of water and outdoor recreational opportuni-

ties already provided by the private sector. Facilities such as dry storage areas for boats and fishing piers support the public water access existing in the region. Private sector opportunities also exist for rental of water-sports equipment and in development of private water-to-land access points along water trail corridors. Sites that provide boaters and other visitors with eating facilities and overnight accommodations are needed throughout the region.

- 63 Implement trails as well as outreach and programming for outdoor environmental education at the **Chesapeake Arboretum**.

The Chesapeake Arboretum (www.chesapeake-arboretum.com) in Chesapeake, is a non-profit 47-acre garden dedicated to promoting horticultural and environmental awareness through displays, education and research. The Arboretum was dedicated in November 1996, and boasts one of Virginia's finest trail systems that wanders through a 43-acre mature hardwood forest with many varieties of trees and plants. It also has a number of theme gardens, including fragrance, antique rose, and demonstration gardens. The Chesapeake Arboretum contributes to the region's outdoor recreational resources by providing a resource for the state's 12th highest ranked outdoor activity, visiting gardens and arboretums.

Table X-21. Region 23 (Hampton Roads Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Baseball	2,113,085	418	fields	315	103	134
Basketball	4,114,535	976	goals	1,211	-235	-161
Bicycling	5,151,143	367	miles	NI		
Mountain	663,429	47	miles	NI		
Other	4,487,714	319	miles	NI		
Lake, river and bay use (combined)	4,613,701	74,667	water acres	169,969	-95,302	-89,640
Power boating	1,865,894	44,973	water acres	S		
Sailing	287,061	2,484	water acres	S		
Saltwater fishing	1,741,501	9,796	water acres	S		
Jet ski, personal watercraft	326,930	5,122	water acres	S		
Water skiing, towed on water	392,316	12,293	water acres	S		
Camping	1,218,413	7,186	sites	7,853	-667	-123
Tent camping	778,253	4,590	sites	1,684	2,906	3,254
Developed camping	440,160	2,596	sites	6,169	-3,573	-3,376
Fitness trail use	3,215,078	258	mile trails	99	159	179
Fields (combined)	5,562,596	1,169	fields	585	584	673
Football	1,849,946	389	fields	566	-177	-148
Soccer	3,712,650	781	fields	19	762	821
Stream use (combined)	3,128,960	1,821	stream miles	1	1,820	1,958
Freshwater fishing	2,334,759	1,642	stream miles	S		
Human-powered boating	586,879	149	stream miles	S		
Rafting	60,602	11	stream miles	S		
Tubing	146,720	19	stream miles	S		
Golfing	3,516,492	119	courses	950	66	75
Hiking, backpacking	1,483,146	761	trail miles	288	473	530
Horseback riding	438,565	190	miles	106	84	98
In-line skating	1,220,007	87	miles	NI		
Jogging, running	20,333,458	1,629	mile trails	NI		
Nature study, programs	452,918	64	sites	10	54	59

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

S: same as combined

NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

(-) indicates surplus

Table X-21. Region 23 (Hampton Roads Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs – continued

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Picnicking away from home	2,065,241	5,362	tables	4,269	1,093	1,499
Skateboarding	1,176,948	362	sites	NI		
Snow skiing or snowboarding	599,638	15	ski lifts	-	15	17
Softball	2,392,172	426	fields	499	-73	-41
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	5,884,742	422	beach acres	1,886	-1,464	-1,432
Swimming	15,947,810	1,025		NI		
Outdoor Area	7,575,210	776	beach acres	1,886	-1,110	-1,052
Outdoor pools	4,991,665	211	pools	104	107	123
Indoor pools	3,380,936	39	pools	18	21	23
Tennis	2,054,078	1,284	courts	895	389	486
Used a playground	8,037,696	1,144	sites	709	435	522
Visiting gardens	1,076,477	118	sites	NI		
Visiting historic sites	3,616,963	306	sites	NI		
Visiting natural areas	2,813,194	476	sites	NI		
Volleyball	1,052,555	312	courts	19	293	317
Hunting	1,361,943	223,344	acres	47,004	176,340	193,274
Drive for pleasure	12,550,926	NA	NA	NI		
Driving motorcycle off road	215,295	98	miles	10	88	96
Driving 4-wheel-drive off road	580,500	NA	NA	NS		
Walking for pleasure	46,057,275	NA	NA	NI		
Bird watching	438,565	NA	NA	NI		
Other	446,539	NA	NA	NI		

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

S: same as combined

NS: not inventoried separately

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(-) indicates surplus

Map X-42 Region 23 (Hampton Roads
Planning District) Conservation Lands
(11 x 17 color)

Map X-43. Region 23 (Hampton Roads
Planning District) Outdoor Recreation
(11 x 17 color)