Virginia Scenic Rivers

Presented by the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

Lynn Crump, LA, ASLA
Presentation

• History of Program
• Intent of Program
• Benefits
• Process & Criteria
• Next Steps
Program Purpose:

• Identify and protect significant river resources
• (Va Code “superior natural and scenic beauty, fish and wildlife, and historic, recreational, geologic, cultural, and other assets”)

![River Landscape Image](image-url)
• Commitment to resource protection
• Accommodate necessary use & development
History

- Virginia Scenic Rivers Act passed by General Assembly in 1970- Chapter 240
- Updates in 2003 & 2012
- Currently 28 river segments - 610+ miles
- 26 segments rivers - found to qualify for designation
- Over 62 segments - identified as worthy of evaluation
- 2010 - 40th Anniversary of the Program
Scenic River System:

- Diverse:
  - Mountain [10]
  - Piedmont [12]
  - Coastal [6]

- 2011 General Assembly- Appomattox & Nottoway extensions
Other possible designations:

New (awaiting community support)

Underway:

Dan Bannister

Meherrin-extension

Under consideration:

Mattaponi  Pamunkey

Tye  Middle James
Scenic Rivers

Legend
STATUS

- Scenic Rivers - Legislatively designated components
- Desirable Components - Evaluated and found worthy of designation
- Potential Components - Identified as being worthy of future study

[Map of Virginia showing Scenic Rivers with different colors for different statuses]
15. Bull Run – entire river
19. Catoctin Creek - Town of Waterford to Potomac R.
36. Goose Creek N/S prongs to Potomac R.
91. Occoquan R. - entire river
101. Rappahannock - Headwaters to Rte. 3 at Ferry Farm
Intent of the Program

- Commitment to resource protection
- Accommodate necessary use & development
River Resource Protection

- Relies on *individual* riparian property owner
- Scenic River Act *does not* authorize any additional restrictions on riparian land uses.
Benefits of Designation

• Encourages:
  – protection and preservation
  – closer review of projects by state & local agencies
  – FERC reviews of hydro or related project proposals

• Requires
  – DCR to administer
  – General Assembly authorization for dams

• Enhances opportunities for funding
Benefits of Designation

• **Provides:**
  – opportunities to consider scenic & other resources in planning & design
  – continued existing riparian land uses
  – eligibility for land use tax considerations, if locally adopted
  – framework for appointment of a local Scenic River Advisory Committee.

• **Allows** project review & monitoring by Board of Conservation and Recreation.
Benefits of Designation

• Supports Land Conservation through
  – Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
  – Conservation Land Tax Credit
  – Virginia Outdoors Foundation
The Act – Section 10.1-402; Development of water & related resources and evaluation as scenic resource

• Department may review & make recommendations to all federal, state and local agencies regarding planning for use and development of water and related resources
NO Dam construction
Designation DOES NOT:

- Authorize condemnation of land for access (Eminent Domain prohibited).
- Impose land use controls
- Affect rights of riparian landowners
- Allow public use of private property
- Enact federal controls, rules, or regulations
- Affect tributary streams
- Promote increase in recreational use
Riparian Uses permitted by law, shall not be restricted
Powers of local governments
with the Director, can appoint a local scenic river advisory committee
Minimum Study Requirement:

1. Min. 5 miles long
2. Recognized in a VA canoeing guide OR public access along its course
3. An identifiable beginning and ending
Designation Process

1. Evaluate River
   A. Request
   B. Map & literature surveys
   C. Field evaluation
   D. 13 eligibility criteria
Field Evaluation Criteria

- Corridor Vegetation
- Stream flow &/or bed modifications
- Human Development of Visual Corridor
- Historic Features
- Landscape
- Quality of Fishery

- Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species
- Water Quality
- Parallel Roads
- Crossings
- Special Aesthetics Features
- Recreation
- Land Conservation
Designation Process  
(For Qualifying Segments)

2. Report preparation and support from the BCR and other agencies

3. Copies provided to citizen/governing bodies with “boiler plate” legislation to local governing body

4. Legislation introduced by local member of the General Assembly

5. Passage by General Assembly & Governor’s signature
Extension Process

• Request
• Field study & qualification
• Legislative Representatives code amendment
• Advantages & restrictions same as full designation
NEXT STEPS

• Letter request
• Provide for field evaluation & background information
• Notify landowners
• Ask legislators to support
Scenic Rivers Program


The program

Virginia Scenic Rivers Program’s intent is to identify, designate and help protect rivers and streams that possess outstanding scenic, recreational, historic and natural characteristics of statewide significance for future generations. This program is managed by the state and should not be confused with the federal Department of the Interior’s Wild and Scenic Rivers Program. One of the program’s strengths is the partnership forged between citizens, local governments and the state. This partnership begins in the evaluation phase and continues.
Scenic River Contacts

- **DCR Administrative Staff** Lynn Crump, (804)786-5054 [Lynn.Crump@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:Lynn.Crump@dcr.virginia.gov)