Mount Rogers

Comers Rock Overlook in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Photo by Synthia Waymack.
Introduction

The Mount Rogers Recreational Planning Region comprises the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington and Wythe, and the cities of Bristol and Galax. The region is in the Ridge and Valley Province and covers 2,782 square miles that stretch from the Appalachian Plateau to the Blue Ridge and from West Virginia to the North Carolina and Tennessee lines. Large tracts of national forest lands, including Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, offer developed campgrounds, picnic areas, miles of hiking, bicycling and horseback riding trails, fishing lakes, trout streams and wilderness. Mount Rogers and Whitetop Mountain are the highest peaks in Virginia, with terrain and habitat features uncommon to other parts of the state and the East Coast. Efforts are increasing to attract tourists to this part of the state as local governments and area businesses join with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the Virginia Tourism Corp. in vacation-planning efforts that highlight area attractions.

The 2010 Census Total Population Maps estimates the Mount Rogers recreation region had a population of 193,595 in 2010, comprising 2.42 percent of Virginia’s population. Continuing with a growth rate of 1.85 percent, the population will be 197,170 by 2020. Growth rates varied across the region from a decrease of 15.35 percent in Grayson County to an increase of 6.88 percent in Washington County. Additionally, the region’s population is aging, bringing new challenges for recreation.

Regional focus

Through the 2011 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey, input from citizen public meetings and partnerships with local and regional staff, the four priority considerations for the Virginia Outdoors Plan emerged: opportunities for outdoor recreation, economics, health and wellness, and land conservation. In addition to these priorities, valuable information related to regions across the Commonwealth was gained. The following section summarizes regional thoughts and strategies for land conservation and outdoor recreation.

The following was noted during the Virginia Outdoors Plan public input sessions:

Health: The region’s physical inactivity and obesity rankings are among the highest in the state and create concern for public health.

Youth: Public input indicates that connecting youths to outdoor activities is important. Youth hunting is popular. Opportunities exist to increase the use of technology and expand the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s Trails to Every Classroom program. Family outdoor activities should incorporate social media and other technologies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>activity</th>
<th>% of households in region</th>
<th>% of households in state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public access to state waters for fishing, swimming and beach use</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails for hiking and walking</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural areas</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic areas</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails for bicycling</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails for wildlife watching and nature study</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public pools</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public access to state waters for nonmotorized boating (canoeing or kayaking)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing fields for outdoor sports (softball, baseball, football and soccer)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails for horseback riding</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public access to state waters for motorized boating</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor playing courts for tennis and basketball</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails for motorized off-road vehicles</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey.
Land conservation

Areas in the Mount Rogers region where conservation is being considered:

- The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has identified the Burke’s Garden area in Tazewell County as a high priority for conservation of its scenic views and its importance to the setting of the Appalachian Trail.

- The Virginia Outdoors Foundation is working on a special project area in Grayson County.

Regional and local organizations and agencies should support land protection efforts on priority lands, as identified by conservation partners in the region. Lands for protection may include those located adjacent to rivers and tributaries, national and state park and forest lands, other parks and natural areas, core battlefield areas, properties on the state and national historic registers, and state scenic byways. For more information about prioritizing land conservation, see Chapter 5, Conservation Planning.

Land trusts and conservation programs operating in the region:

Regional Recommendations

Table 3.2 Conserved lands
Mount Rogers Recreational Planning Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>locality</th>
<th>acres</th>
<th>type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bland County</td>
<td>2,004.11</td>
<td>Easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bland County</td>
<td>76,769.56</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll County</td>
<td>3,664.34</td>
<td>Easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll County</td>
<td>14,886.46</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Bristol</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Galax</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>Easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Galax</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayson County</td>
<td>9,548.57</td>
<td>Easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayson County</td>
<td>39,850.60</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyth County</td>
<td>10,122.71</td>
<td>Easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyth County</td>
<td>89,512.76</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren County</td>
<td>6,931.96</td>
<td>Easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren County</td>
<td>23,737.07</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington County</td>
<td>4,971.61</td>
<td>Easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington County</td>
<td>37,888.29</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wythe County</td>
<td>8,651.49</td>
<td>Easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wythe County</td>
<td>66,811.19</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>395,416.09</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Outdoor recreation

Public-meeting participants highlighted the need to focus on getting youths outdoors. There is demand for better access to recreation facilities, information on the facilities and programs, and getting youths familiar with the out-of-doors through increased classroom education.

Table 3.3 Per-capita spending on parks and recreation
Mount Rogers Recreational Planning Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>locality</th>
<th>dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bland County</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll County</td>
<td>24.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayson County</td>
<td>12.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington County</td>
<td>12.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyth County</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wythe County</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Abingdon</td>
<td>288.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Marion</td>
<td>90.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Wytheville</td>
<td>180.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Bristol</td>
<td>152.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Galax</td>
<td>182.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide</strong></td>
<td><strong>62.81</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Economic impact

The region’s economy has historically been based in agriculture, timbering and manufacturing; however, tourism is growing. The region needs quantifiable data on the economic benefits of outdoor recreation’s contributions to tourism. The 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy recognizes the importance of recreation and specifically trails in generating revenues and providing a higher quality of life.

Table 3.4 Virginia State Parks 2013 attendance and economic impact
Mount Rogers Recreational Planning Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>state park</th>
<th>location</th>
<th>overnight visitors</th>
<th>day-use visitors</th>
<th>total visitors</th>
<th>economic impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grayson Highlands</td>
<td>Grayson County</td>
<td>36,209</td>
<td>105,834</td>
<td>105,823</td>
<td>$4,408,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungry Mother</td>
<td>Smyth County</td>
<td>62,136</td>
<td>188,391</td>
<td>178,105</td>
<td>$7,509,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New River Trail</td>
<td>Carroll, Grayson, Pulaski, Wythe counties, town of Galax</td>
<td>7,534</td>
<td>1,039,787</td>
<td>940,931</td>
<td>$15,619,946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virginia State Parks.
The Mount Rogers Planning District is developing and marketing outdoor recreation through partnerships with LENOWISCO, Cumberland Plateau and New River Valley planning districts, and the Friends of Southwest Virginia. According to the Virginia Tourism Corp., domestic travel to the region generated more than $384,255,503 in 2011, or approximately 1.9 percent of statewide travel expenditures. This is an increase of 8.7 percent since 2010.

Appalachian Spring is an innovative partnership promoting tourism, business growth and community development through Southwest Virginia’s world-class outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resources. The Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage affiliated 501 (c)(3) entity, Friends of Southwest Virginia manages revenues, gifts and grants to Heartwood and distributes financial support to a variety of cultural heritage organizations, such as The Crooked Road and ‘Round the Mountain.

Health and wellness
According to the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps program, the percentage of physically inactive adults in this region is among the highest in the state. The region’s percentage of physically inactive adults ranges from 25 percent in Smyth County to 30 percent in Carroll and Washington counties.

Recreation is important for regional populations, particularly for families and children in poverty. Targeted programs for creating healthy living are especially important in areas with high rates of poverty. According to the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps program, more than 10 percent of children in the following counties live in poverty: Bland (18 percent), Carroll (25 percent), Grayson (27 percent), Smyth (28 percent), Washington (19 percent) and Wythe (23 percent), and the cities of Bristol (34 percent) and Galax (36 percent). A limited number of outdoor programs are offered across the region.

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.
- Is able to be initiated within the next five years.

Featured projects for the Mount Rogers region
- Complete connections to the Great Eastern Trail through the Allegheny and Blue Ridge mountains to link existing trails from central Alabama to central New York.
- Continue to promote and develop the Wilderness Road as it traverses the region, where it is also known as the Frontier Trail.
- The New River Initiative is an integrated watershed protection effort to preserve this American Heritage River—renowned for its wildlife and recreation opportunities. The New River connects six rural Virginia communities that are collaborating with the New River Community Partners to build regional recreation capacity. Collaborative efforts should continue to accomplish regionally significant projects.

- Develop the Salt Trail, a 10-mile rail-to-trail conversion under development between the towns of Saltville and Glade Spring.

- Evaluate the Trans-American Bike Trail (U.S. Bike Route 76) to determine if the trail is still located on the best roads. Recent development has changed traffic levels and some sections of the route carry too much vehicle traffic suitable for Bike Route 76.

- Develop the Mendota Trail along portions of the abandoned Southern Railroad corridor between Bristol and Moccasin Gap.

- Complete a multiuse trail adjacent to Route 52 that connects Bland County to the Appalachian Trail.

Local parks and recreation projects
- Continue to develop the Chilhowie Walking Trail.

- Seek funding to develop the Regional Recreational Sports Multiplex, for outdoor sports in Washington County.

- Provide lighting and site improvements for softball, baseball, T-ball and multipurpose sport fields at Beaver Dam Recreational Park in Damascus.

- Improve outdoor recreation and sports opportunities for youths in eastern Washington County.

- Construct the Beaver Dam Creek Trail.

- The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission has plans for streetscape improvements to include biking and pedestrian opportunities in the region’s towns.

- Park facilities could be developed at the Bland County Fairgrounds.
CHAPTER 10  Regional Recommendations

Region 3 • Mount Rogers

Regional Recommendations

Chapter 10

Map 3.2  Mount Rogers featured projects

Water access

- Continue planning and development of the New River Blueway (New River Canoe Trail) as a water trail with access sites, rest areas, campsites and a portage around Fries Dam.

- Access sites are needed at appropriate distances along the Big Reed Island Creek, North Fork Holston and South Fork Holston rivers and along stretches of other major streams to encourage boating and other water sports.

- Complete the Peak Creek and Little River proposed blueways.

- Improve public access to stocked trout streams.

Trails and greenways

There is regional interest in trails that connect communities and public facilities. Long-distance trails for horses and ATVs are needed, along with support facilities such as restrooms, informational kiosks and signage.

Multistate trails or routes

Trails recognized under the National Trails System Act include the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Other multistate trails include Overmountain Victory Trail and U.S. Bike Route 76.

Appalachian Trail initiatives

- Regional and local efforts should continue to protect the setting and viewsheds along the trail to preserve the wilderness experience of the Appalachian Trail.
CHAPTER 10 Regional Recommendations

Region 3 • Mount Rogers

- Collaborative management of the Appalachian Trail comes in part from Abingdon, Damascus and Bland County, official Appalachian Trail Communities, and the Trails to Every Classroom program.

- Support trail crews to manage the section from Damascus to Route 16 in Marion.

- Protect 260 acres in Smyth County for trail realignment.

- Construct a pedestrian bridge along the New Trail alignment crossing at Interstate 77.

- Continue development of trails connecting the Appalachian Trail to local communities and trails.

- Provide regional connections linking existing trail systems with the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail. Important local trail components include New River Trail State Park, Virginia Highlands, Iron Mountain, Virginia Creeper and the Overmountain Victory trails.

- Bike Trail Link – Connect the Virginia Creeper Trail to a trail system in Johnson County and Mountain City, Tenn. The first link is from Damascus to Camp Ahistidy. Provide funding to build and enhance tourism, recreation and economic opportunities.

- Extend the New River Trail State Park to Pulaski.

Bike routes

- Continue to develop and promote the Virginia Mountain Bike Trail. Provide beginner trails and stacked loops to provide opportunities for a variety of skill levels.

- Continue safety improvements and signage to U.S. Bicycle Route 76, which uses routes 80, 91, 58, 603, 16, 601, 614, 749 to Route 11.

- The Virginia Creeper Trail is a 34.1-mile multiuse trail. Prior to 2004, according to the report, The Virginia Creeper Trail: An Assessment of User Demographics, Preferences, and Economics the trail has had positive economic impacts for the town of Damascus and surrounding area.

- New River Trail State Park is a rails-to-trails project stretching more than 50 miles through Grayson, Carroll, Wythe and Pulaski counties.

Other trails

- Extend the Wytheville Greenway to Reed Creek.

- Develop trails close to population centers.

Thematic driving tours

There has been tremendous interest in thematic driving tours. These include heritage-based tours, agricultural or product-based tours, and nature-based tours such as the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail and Fish Virginia First. Virginia Tourism Corp. maintains a list of Virginia’s scenic drives.

Specific trails that pass through the region include the Crooked Road: Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail, the ‘Round the Mountain Artisan Trail, Fish Virginia First and the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

- Continue to develop the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail.

Historic and landscape resources

The 2011 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey reports that visiting historic sites is the fourth most popular recreational activity in this region. Thus, protecting the region’s historic and cultural resources in their landscape settings is essential to maintaining the quality of life in the Mount Rogers recreational planning region. Local government and local and regional organizations should ensure that countywide historic and architectural resource surveys are completed, especially in Bland and Carroll counties. The region continues efforts to
CHAPTER 10 Regional Recommendations

Regional Recommendations

Region 3 • Mount Rogers

recognize and protect historical resources by proactively listing several sites on the National Register of Historic Places.

- The Wolf Creek Bridge, listed on the National Register and located in a public park off Interstate 77 in Bland County, needs funds for maintenance and promotion as a tourist site.

Scenic resources

The following scenic resources were identified through Virginia Outdoors Plan public meetings or in collaboration with Scenic Virginia, a private, nonprofit organization that is building a registry of Virginia places of significant scenic beauty.

- Appalachian Trail
- Bland County
- Blue Ridge Parkway, a National Scenic Byway and All-American Road
- Buzzards Rock
- Comers Rock Overlook, the fire tower near Little Dry Run Wilderness
- Hungry Mother State Park
- Powell Valley along Route 23 and the overlook
- Route 77 Hillsville to North Carolina line
- Whitemountain in the Mountain Rogers National Recreation Area
- Wilburn Ridge near Grayson Highlands State Park and Lewis Fork Wilderness
- Grayson Highlands State Park
- New River Trail State Park
- Virginia Creeper Trail
- Mount Rogers
- New River
- National Scenic Areas in Mount Rogers National Recreation Area including Seng Mountain and Bear Creek

Scenic highways and Virginia byways

The Virginia Department of Transportation provides information on the Virginia byways Program along with a scenic roads map.

- The Blue Ridge Parkway is one of three designated an All-American Roads in Virginia. It connects Shenandoah National Park with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. As the nation’s longest rural parkway, it showcases the southern Appalachian Mountains’ diverse history and scenic views.

Scenic rivers

There are no designated state scenic rivers in the Mount Rogers region.

The following river segments have been evaluated and qualify for Virginia scenic river designation:

- Whitetop Laurel Creek from Green Cove Creek junction in Grayson County to Damascus
- New River from the North Carolina line to Byllesby Dam and from Buck Hydo Dam to Allisonia
- Big Reed Island Creek from Route 753 to New River in Carroll and Pulaski counties
- Walker Creek from Point Pleasant to the Giles County line

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

- The North Fork of the Holston River from the confluence with Big Brumley Creek to the Tennessee state line in Scott County
CHAPTER 10  Regional Recommendations

Regional Recommendations

Region 3 • Mount Rogers

• The Middle Fork Holston River from Seven Mile Ford to South Holston Lake in Washington County
• South Fork Holston River from Sugar Grove to South Holston Lake
• Cripple Creek from Speedwell to the New River in Wythe County
• Laurel Fork from the headwaters to Big Reed Island Creek in Carroll County
• Big Brumley Creek from Hidden Valley Lake to its confluence with the North Fork of the Holston in Washington County

There may be opportunities along the New River, a designated American Heritage River, for economic development linked with existing resources, especially the New River Trail State Park. North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia are cooperating with the National Park Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a New River Blueway that will provide a series of access points and managed use areas along the river.

Federal programs

State facilities and programs

State parks

A master plan has been developed for the following state parks in this region. The master plan outlines proposed, phased facility development in each park.

Grayson Highlands State Park (4,502 acres) is located in the Grayson County, adjacent to the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area.

Recommendations:
• Upgrade electric and construct two camping cabins in campground.
• Construct picnic shelter near visitor center.
• Expand trail system to connect to points of interest inside and outside the park.

Hungry Mother State Park (3,334 acres) is located in Smyth County.

Recommendations:
• Construct group camp on western side of Camp Burson.
• Construct a foot bridge from eastern side of Amphitheater Island.
• Expand support facilities in environmental education area.
• Expand the trail system.

New River Trail State Park (1,371 acres) is a 57-mile long rail to trail, crossing through Grayson, Carroll, Wythe and Pulaski counties.

Recommendations:
• Renovate the Foster Falls Hotel Complex and parsonage.
• Develop a picnic area at Foster Falls with shelter, rest room and parking.
• Develop Phase 1 recommendations for Horseshoe Bend, Big Reed Island, Double Shoals and Hiwassee Island development nodes.

Tennessee Valley Authority

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) operates and manages 14 water-access sites on about 44 acres in the Commonwealth along the Clinch, Powell and Holston rivers and on South Holston Reservoir. In 2011, TVA developed a natural resource plan that will guide the authority’s activities and programs for next 20 years, including the recreation management of its resources. The TVA works with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and local governments to implement outdoor recreation opportunities.
REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 10

Region 3 • Mount Rogers

- Develop the Mark E. Hufeisen Horse Complex to include a well and septic system, restrooms, shower and car/spectator parking.

- Upgrade safety at all road crossings.

- Work with Carroll County to close Route 737 from Byllesby Power House to Grayson Station and develop parking and car-top launch.

Lick Creek Natural Area (863 acres) is located in Smyth and Bland counties. The property was acquired in 1961 primarily for its natural beauty and resources. While development of the property is acceptable within the confines of the deed, a limiting factor is public access.

State natural area preserves

The Mount Rogers region is a very biologically diverse area of the state. The six highest peaks in Virginia are located in the district and support a variety of plants, animals and communities typical of much more northern parts of the continent. The three forks of the Holston River are home to many rare fishes, mussels and other animals found only in the upper Tennessee watershed. Much of the northern half of the region is underlain by limestone, which is interlaced with caves harboring an assortment of rare animals. The lowlands of Grayson and Carroll counties are dotted with unusual wetlands, which are home to a variety of rare plants and the imperiled bog turtle.

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

Conservation targets include:

- Protection of significant caves and karst areas.

- Protection and improvement of water quality for globally rare aquatic communities.

- Protection of significant seepage wetlands in Grayson and Carroll counties.

- Protection of additional lands around Red Rock Mountain, Grayson Glades and Big Spring Bog natural area preserves.

- Establishment of segments of the Virginia Karst Trail on public lands with significant karst areas.

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 staff. For a discussion of the Natural Heritage Program, see Chapter 9.

Table 3.5 Natural area preserves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>preserve name</th>
<th>owner</th>
<th>locality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Spring Bog</td>
<td>DCR</td>
<td>Grayson County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayson Glades</td>
<td>DCR</td>
<td>Grayson County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Rock Mountain</td>
<td>DCR</td>
<td>Smyth County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Channels</td>
<td>DOF</td>
<td>Washington County (part)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virginia Natural Heritage Program.

Table 3.6 Natural heritage resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mount Rogers Recreational Planning Region</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of rare species and significant natural communities</th>
<th>824</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of different rare species and significant community types (natural heritage elements)</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of globally rare natural heritage elements</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of species listed as federally endangered or threatened</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of species listed as state endangered or threatened</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of conservation sites identified by DCR</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of conservation sites with some protection</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of conservation sites with more than 65% of area with some protection</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of adequately protected conservation sites</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data as of July 1, 2012.

Source: Virginia Natural Heritage Program.
State fish hatcheries and wildlife management areas

- DGIF has acquired the 8,300-acre Big Survey property near Wytheville for a wildlife management area. This property has potential for a variety of dispersed recreation opportunities.

State forests

Channels State Forest (4,836 acres) in Washington and Russell counties includes 721 acres of the Channels Natural Area Preserve, a 400 million-year-old sandstone outcropping. The forest offers recreational opportunities, including parts of the 14-mile Brumley Mountain Trail that runs from Hidden Valley Lake to State Route 80.

Hawks State Forest (121 acres) in Carroll County is used to demonstrate and manage forest species indigenous to southwest Virginia, wildlife habitat improvement and watershed management. DOF should pursue options for additional access to fully utilize the property resources. Hunting is prohibited on the Hawks State Forest.

Matthews State Forest (566 acres) in Grayson County is managed for a variety of research, educational and recreational uses. DOF should continue development plans for an education pavilion with restrooms and pursue opportunities to acquire easements or fee interests in adjacent properties that could enhance the forest.

Old Flat State Forest (320 acres) in Grayson County is a research forest managed in conjunction with Mount Rogers Area Christmas Tree Growers Association for high-elevation trees. The forest should continue to offer and expand recreational opportunities such as hiking, wildlife watching, biking and horseback riding. Hunting is prohibited on the Old Flat State Forest.

Other state lands

- Virginia Highlands Community College in Washington County has a 100-acre tract with potential for the development of recreational facilities.

Private sector

- Private property owners could explore viewshed protection and possibly public acquisition of Abram’s Falls in Washington County.

Website directory

- Mount Rogers Recreational Planning Region http://www.mrpdc.org/
- Blue Ridge Highlands Fishing Trail http://www.fishblueridge.com/
- Appalachian Spring http://www.virginiaoutdoors.com/article/more/4104
- Friends of Southwest Virginia http://www.myswva.org/
- County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Virginia Data http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app#/virginia/2012/measure/factors/24/map
- Great Eastern Trail http://greateasterntrail.net/
- Appalachian National Scenic Trail http://www.nps.gov/appa/index.htm
- Overmountain Victory Trail http://www.nps.gov/ovvi/index.htm
- U.S. Bike Route 76 http://www.virgiadiot.org/bikemap/
- Beaches to Bluegrass Trail http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/tr-sbibi2e.shtml
- Publication - The Virginia Creeper Trail: An Assessment of User Demographics, Preferences, and Economics (http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/documents/userdems_vct.pdf)
- New River Trail State Park (http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/new.shtml)
## Website directory continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website Directory</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish Virginia First</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fishvirginiafirst.com/">http://www.fishvirginiafirst.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crooked Road: Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail</td>
<td><a href="http://thecrookedroad.org/">http://thecrookedroad.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round the Mountain Artisan Trail</td>
<td><a href="http://www.roundthemountain.org/">http://www.roundthemountain.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nps.gov/ovvi/index.htm">http://www.nps.gov/ovvi/index.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Cave and Karst Trail</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/karsthome.shtml">http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/karsthome.shtml</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Virginia</td>
<td><a href="http://www.scenicvirginia.org/">http://www.scenicvirginia.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Byways Program</td>
<td><a href="http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/prog-byways.asp">http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/prog-byways.asp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge Parkway</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nps.gov/blri/index.htm">http://www.nps.gov/blri/index.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tva.com/river/rec/recreation/index.htm">http://www.tva.com/river/rec/recreation/index.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVA Natural Resource Plan - Overview</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tva.gov/environment/reports/nrp/">http://www.tva.gov/environment/reports/nrp/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Rogers Area Christmas Tree Growers Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mtrogersfraserfir.org/">http://www.mtrogersfraserfir.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State park master plans</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/masterplans.shtml">http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/masterplans.shtml</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayson Highlands State Park</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/gra.shtml">http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/gra.shtml</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungry Mother State Park</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/hun.shtml">http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/hun.shtml</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia’s Registry of Natural Areas</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/registry.shtml">http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/registry.shtml</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>