

The *Virginia Outdoors Plan* is the state's official guide for meeting Virginia's outdoor recreation and land conservation needs.

- The plan is produced every five years by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- The plan helps Virginia qualify for federal funds for outdoor recreation through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- Resources, organizations and partners responsible for managing outdoor recreation, open space and conservation lands are identified in the plan.

Key features

- Results of the 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey.
- Health, economic and other benefits of parks, trails and land protection.
- Updated VOP Mapper, the online mapping tool for viewing outdoor recreation and land conservation resources.
- Featured projects listed for each of Virginia's 21 planning districts.

Funding and economic impact

Virginians support a dedicated source of funding for the acquisition and development of new outdoor recreation facilities and the maintenance of existing facilities.

Since 1965, more than 400 projects in Virginia have been funded through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. The program provides 50 percent matching funds to state agencies and localities for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation resources.



70% of Virginians support public spending to prevent the loss of natural areas and open spaces.

\$304.5 million

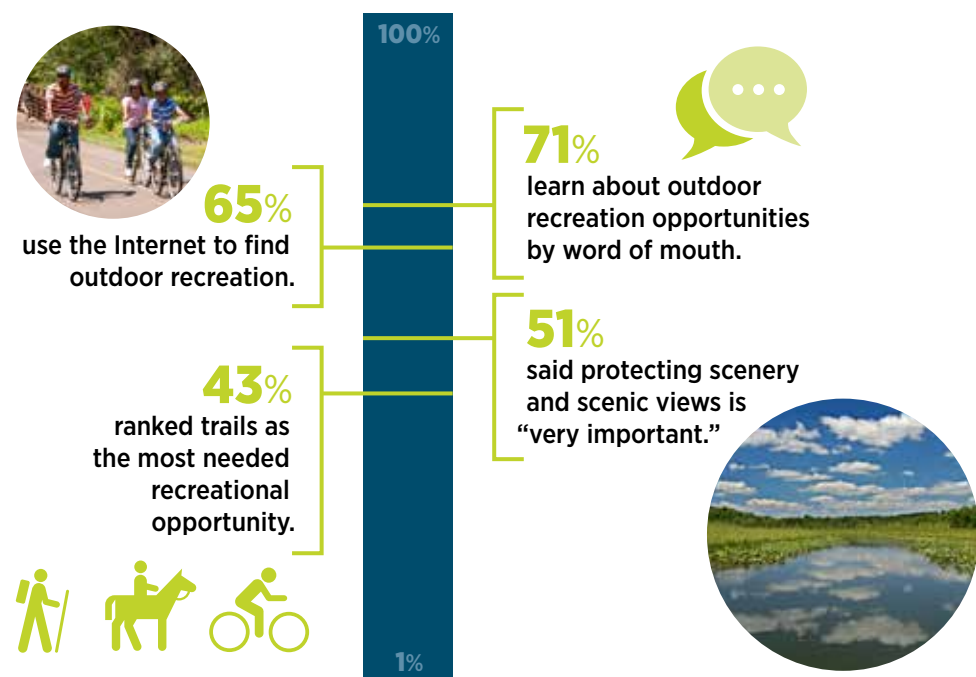
Virginia State Parks 2017 economic impact

\$1.1 billion

2017 visitor spending at national parks in Virginia

Survey highlights

Results of the 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey provide a useful basis to support strategic planning for Virginia's outdoor recreation needs. The survey was administered by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia. **14,000** households were mailed surveys. **3,252** completed surveys.



Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities by Participation

	% households
Visiting natural areas	71
Driving for pleasure	67
Walking for pleasure	67
Visiting parks (local, state and national)	56
Swimming/outdoor pool	48
Sunbathing/relaxing on a beach	47
Viewing the water	38
Swimming/beach/lake river (open water)	37
Visiting historic areas	35
Freshwater fishing	34

See results for more than 100 activities at www.dcr.virginia.gov/vop.

Virginia's outdoor recreation assets

2,440 local and regional parks

38 state parks

56,782 acres of natural area preserves

4,081,571 acres of conserved land

2,268 miles of water trails

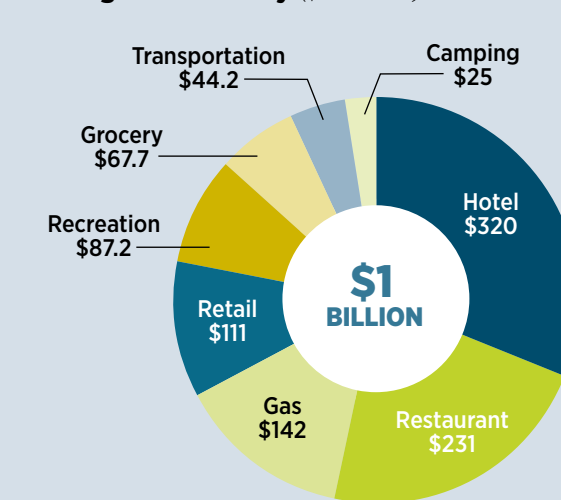
1 million acres of globally significant conservation sites

724 water access sites

860 miles of designated scenic rivers

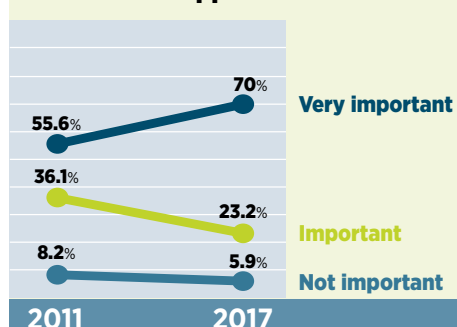
Source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

National Park Contributions to Virginia's Economy (\$ in millions)

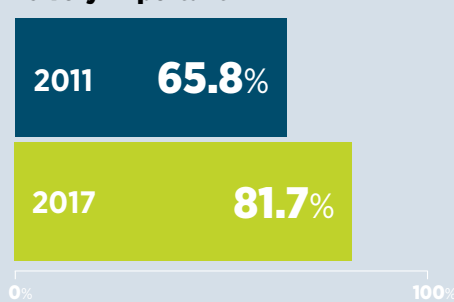


Source: National Park Service

Access to Outdoor Recreation Opportunities



Respondents who said Protection of Natural Areas is Very Important



On April 24, 2018, Gov. Ralph Northam announced a new state land conservation strategy:

“I believe that we need a land conservation strategy that is focused and targeted toward making measurable progress on our natural resource goals ... Through this data-driven process, we will prioritize the most important targeted lands and direct limited resources toward those conservation projects that provide the greatest benefit in the most cost-effective manner.”

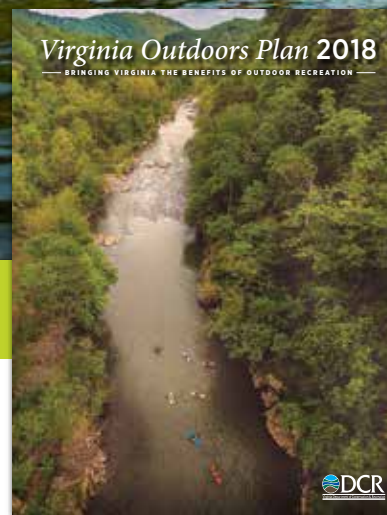
Virginia Outdoors Plan Summary 2018



Challenges for planners and providers

- *Climate change* — More frequent and extreme weather events caused by a changing climate threaten to destroy facilities and alter natural shorelines.
- *Sea level rise* — Unpredictable rainfall patterns and sea level rise are stressing Virginia’s native natural communities and species.
- *Carrying capacity* — Balancing resource protection with user needs and expectations is an added pressure for park planners and managers.
- *Funding* — State natural resource agencies and nearly every local government struggle to meet citizen and visitor demands because of a lack of funding for parks and trails. There is no consistent funding source of state monies to sustain and increase outdoor recreation and land conservation.

See the full plan for analysis of these challenges.
www.dcr.virginia.gov/vop



Photos, cover front: Sam Dean, Virginia Tourism Corp., cover back: The Virginia Highlands Horse Trail in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Divergent Traveler, Virginia Tourism Corp.
Inside left: The W&OD Trail. Christopher Hunter Photography, Virginia Tourism Corp., Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve. Gary P. Fleming. right: Claytor Lake State Park. Sam Dean, Virginia Tourism Corp.

Download the full plan at www.dcr.virginia.gov/vop.



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